ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM PROPOSALS IN GERMANY FROM 1510 TO 1520

by

Richard Arthur Crofts

Department of Religion
Duke University

Date: April 23, 1969

Approved:

Hans J. Hillerbrand, Supervisor

Waldo Beach

Egil Grislis

Arthur B. Ferguson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of Religion
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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

This study arose out of an interest in ecclesiastical conditions on the eve of the Reformation. Reformation scholarship has accepted certain generalizations about the period which have not been supported by broadly-based historical investigation. It has tended, for example, to assume that all of Germany was "crying for reform." This study centers on one aspect of the ecclesiastical state of affairs: the existence of extensive sentiment for ecclesiastical reform.

The purpose of this investigation was to collect the calls for reform in Germany during the period from 1510 to 1520. They were then examined as to their quantitative and qualitative significance. The study sought to answer three questions: (1) how extensive were calls for reform? (2) what were the objectives of the reform proposals? (3) how were these objectives to be realized?

Several principles were adopted to limit the scope of this investigation. Consideration was limited geographically to Germany even though that term did not have the preciseness then it now has. The subject was limited chronologically to the period from 1510 to 1520. This period includes the years leading up to the Reformation. The *terminus ad quem* was 152[illegible]

because after then religious affairs in Germany took a different turn. No longer was the period a time for making reform proposals in a generally "open" atmosphere. From 1521 on, publicists or pamphleteers took over and the alternatives were reduced to becoming a "Lutheran" or remaining a "Catholic."

Since the purpose was to investigate public reform proposals, in most cases source material was limited to works published at the time. In a few cases it was necessary to include the correspondence of some figures who were important to German affairs but were not literarily oriented. Some degree of selectivity was used to make the study feasible. However, all important figures who were active during this period were included, and all viewpoints were represented.

The other major limitation of sources was the exclusion of Martin Luther from consideration. Luther's concept of church reform would be well worth investigating in itself, but the thrust of this project is to discuss the context of reform sentiment into which Luther must be placed. Since scholarship has tended to spend more time discussing Luther's ideas, it seemed important to discover how the rest of German society approached the subject of church reform.

The dissertation is arranged topically. The introductory chapter poses the problem in the context of the present state of Reformation scholarship. The second chapter attempts a brief phenomenology of reform. The third chapter discusses ecclesiastical criticism as church reform. In chapter four

the nearly unanimous desire for an authority upon which to base church reform is summarized. Chapter five describes the efforts for Christian renewal in our time period. The sixth chapter outlines the ecclesiastical reform interests of various secular elements of German society and notes the mixture of non-religious and religious issues in the course of the Reformation.

The study concludes that there was a striking lack of specific reform proposals in Germany from 1510 to 1520. A survey of the literature published in Germany during that period reveals considerable interest in secular subjects and more interest in devotional literature than in church reform. Few individuals, whether clergy or laity, were so driven by a desire for reform to be known as reformers per se. Both the extensiveness and the depth of dissatisfaction with the church were questioned. Ecclesiastical criticism tended to take a relatively modest form. No satisfying explanation for why the Reformation happened was found in collecting the calls for reform.

PREFACE

This study arose out of an interest in ecclesiastical conditions on the eve of the Reformation. For too long Protestants have viewed the Reformation as a holy crusade that rid the church of the errors and corruption that had infiltrated during the Middle Ages. Recent historians, skeptical of this analysis, are re-examining this popular Protestant attitude. That historical scholarship provides the context for this investigation.

Many difficult questions about the state of ecclesiastical affairs just prior to the Reformation remain unanswered. One of these questions pertains to the existence of extensive ecclesiastical reform sentiment. Our purpose is to collect the calls for reform of the church in Germany in the second decade of the sixteenth century. What were the alternatives to the reform program offered by Luther? To what extent were the various elements of German society calling for reform? Can it be said that all Germany was crying for reform? If so, what did they want reformed, and how did they hope to bring it about?

This study treats the concept of ecclesiastical reform held by various people in Germany before the time at which they had to decide whether or not to become "Lutherans." The stress scholarship has placed on understanding Luther's ideas has sometimes resulted in the de-emphasis of other individuals and groups in German society. To see how these others desired to reform the church is a major purpose of this investigation. After 1520, religious affairs in Germany took a different turn. No longer was the period a time of alternative reform proposals made in a somewhat "open" atmosphere. From 1521 on, publicists or pamphleteers took over; and alternatives were reduced to becoming a "Lutheran" or remaining a "Catholic." To survey the alternatives in the historical situation up to that time is the most important part of this endeavor.

In summary, our purpose is to investigate the public sentiment for church reform in this time period. In the process, three questions are answered: (1) how extensive were calls for reform? (2) what were the objectives of the reform proposals? (3) how were these objectives to be realized?

Several limiting principles have formed the methodology for this survey. Consideration is limited geographically to Germany. Even though that designation did not have the preciseness in the sixteenth century it has had in more recent times, writers in our period did not hesitate to use the term (Luther, Murner, Hutten, e.g.). The discussion is also chronologically limited to the period from 1510 to 1520. These chronological boundaries are overstepped on occasion. Some sources written before that period are used either because they were republished during the period or had obvious continuing significance (the Enchiridion of Erasmus, e.g.). On rare occasions sources beyond 1520 are used when they are necessary or helpful.

Furthermore, since the purpose is to discover the publicly-known alternatives for ecclesiastical reform, consideration is limited to sources published during the period. At times, in order to complete a reformer's thought, it is necessary to use correspondence and other works that remained unpublished until after 1520. Some of the humanists and politicians used in this study were not literarily oriented and thus left no published literature from which their concept of church reform might be derived. In these instances their correspondence provided insight into their reform interests.

Another limiting principle is the use of representative figures. No attempt is made to include all possibilities. On the basis of publications during our period and of general historical significance, certain figures have been used to illustrate the viewpoint of their respective groups. It is impossible and unnecessary to survey all the members of any particular group we consider. Because they left no literary record, many individuals have been omitted. However, this study omits no one whose views on church reform were publicly known. The reader will perhaps find a favorite who has been excluded. However, all major viewpoints are represented.

Since the purpose of this study is to evaluate public sentiment, works published in German are more significant for our conclusions than those in Latin. This distinction cannot be made too clearly, however, because some important sources whose original language was German were published in Latin (sermons, e.g.). Consideration is also limited to those sources more likely to deal with the subject of church reform. For example, poetical works of the humanists and their works on classical antiquity are given scant attention compared to such collections as the Letters of Obscure Men or the 1520 German dialogues of Hutten.

The final major limitation of sources was the exclusion of Martin Luther. A historical investigation of Luther's program for church reform would be an interesting, helpful, and full-length study in itself. However, this study is limited to a consideration of the reform interests and proposals of German reformers other than Luther. Thus it discusses the context of sentiment for church reform into which Luther must be placed.

These methodological limitations are used as basic guidelines but are not applied in too rigid a manner. They are overstepped when it seems necessary in order to offer a more complete description or to illustrate a point.

The presentation of our findings follows a topical arrangement. After two chapters of an introductory nature, the third chapter discusses criticism of ecclesiastical conditions. The following chapter surveys the various approaches to the use of authority in church reform. The fifth chapter summarizes the more important expressions of church reform in terms of a renewal of the Christian life. The last chapter outlines the reform interests of the political or social groups of Germany with special attention to the mixture of religious and non-religious concerns. The conclusion includes a general evaluation of reform sentiment and remarks on the way various segments of German society responded to the need and desire for church reform.

A word of appreciation is due to Duke University and the Danforth Foundation for financial assistance which allowed me to devote full time to my graduate studies. The assistance and understanding of the staff of the Divinity School Library of Duke University made this study both easier and more pleasant. Mr. Emerson Ford rescued me on several occasions by procuring source material from other libraries throughout the country. Mrs. Joan Little typed the manuscript with both speed and accuracy which made it possible for me to meet a difficult deadline. I am endebted to several members of the University faculty for their help in my development as a historian: Waldo Beach, Ray C. Petry, and Egil Grislis of the Religion Department; Arthur Ferguson and Charles Young of the History Department. A special word of thanks and appreciation is extended to Hans J. Hillerbrand who provided the inspiration for this study and did his best to see that it reached a sound conclusion. His example and guidance in the historical discipline formed the foundation for my graduate education. My friend and fellow student, John Sharpe, made the completion of this work possible from a distance of several hundred miles. Above all I was assisted by my wife, Joyce, who gave sympathetic support and understanding through four demanding years.

R.A.C.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Historians on all sides are re-examining the Reformation.[1] Confessional groupings do not have the significance they formerly did in Reformation studies, and more authentically historical approaches are replacing denominationally oriented thought.[1] Ecclesiastical lines are so frequently crossed that one can no longer assume that Roman Catholic historians will assign evil and revolutionary designs to the Reformation and the career of Luther, nor that they will

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[1] Several articles summarizing the present state of Reformation research could be cited; but by far the most penetrating survey is the one by Bernd Moeller, "Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LXXVI (1965), pp. 246-257. Moeller's article is not a complete account of recent writings but an incisive analysis and criticism of recent trends with important suggestions as to the future path Reformation historiography should travel. For Luther research Moeller proposes a more historical and less systematic approach, as well as an attempt to relate Luther to late scholastic theology and humanism. He suggests four promising areas of research: (1) the relation of the Reformation to the Middle Ages including the religious and spiritual situation in Germany on the eve of the Reformation, (2) the dialogical character of Luther's writing--a further emphasis on historical rather than textual study of Luther, (3) what reformers other than Luther were concerned about, (4) the Reformation movement as a whole--the political, economic, social, and intellectual aspects of the period. For the best assessment of the varied interpretations of the Reformation from the sixteenth century through the twentieth, see John Dolan, *History of the Reformation: A Conciliatory Assessment of Opposite Views* (New York, 1965), chap. one, "The Reformation in Retrospect," pp. 21-63. In his article on "Interpretations of the Reformation," *American Historical Review*, LXVI (1960), 74-84, Roland Bainton cites the need for a historiography of the Reformation as a whole. He challenges Reformation scholarship with answering the question, "Why the Reformation?" He suggests further investigation of the political and economic factors in the Reformation, the relationship between the Reformation and the Renaissance, the use of

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psychoanalysis in Reformation study, and he observes the trends among Catholic and neo-orthodox historians.

[1] Reformation scholarship has come a long way since Grisar and Denifle searched the sources for evidence to demonstrate the "dark" side of Luther's character. See Hartmann Grisar, Luther, (3 vols.; 2d ed.; Freiburg im Breisgau, 1911-1912), and Heinrich Denifle, Luther und Luthertum in der ersten Entwickelung (2 vols.; 2d ed.; Mainz, 1904-1909). In the past some Catholics explained the Reformation as the work of one rebellious monk. See, for example, Karl Bihlmeyer, Church History, translated by Victor E. Mills and Francis J. Muller (3 vols.; rev. by Hermann Tüchle; Westminster, Maryland, 1966), III, 4-5. Older Protestant historians like John Lawrence Mosheim recounted stories of the corruption that they assumed pervaded the church in Luther's day. See Mosheim's An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century, translated by Archibald Maclaine (6 vols.; London, 1819), IV, 8: "Not only private persons, but also the most powerful princes and sovereign states, exclaimed loudly against the despotic dominion of the pontiffs, the fraud, violence, avarice, and injustice that prevailed in their councils, the arrogance, tyranny, and extortion of their legates, the unbridled licentiousness and enormous crimes of the clergy and monks of all denominations, the unrighteous severity and partiality of the Roman laws, and demanded publicly, as their ancestors had done before them, a Reformation of the church, in its head and in its members, and a general council to accomplish that necessary and happy purpose." The editor adds in a footnote: "Nor do the wiser and more learned among the modern Romanists pretend to deny that the church and clergy, before the time of Luther, were corrupted in a very high degree." Protestants sometimes viewed Luther as the unique restorer of true Christianity and the doctrine of justification by faith as the standard by which all historical evaluations should be made. See, for example, J.A. Singmaster, "Luther and the Reformers before the Reformation," The Lutheran Quarterly, n.s., LXVII (1917), 457-470.

necessarily deny there was any need for reform in the sixteenth century.[1] Many Protestant scholars realize that the ecclesiastical situation was not so immoral as earlier historians had depicted. Some admit that the Reformation, though necessary for the life of the church, had tragic consequences for Christendom.[2]

This new examination has reopened the question of the state of ecclesiastical affairs that existed on the eve of the Reformation. Efforts are being made to discover the actual religious conditions in Germany in the early sixteenth century, but extensive research must follow before scholars can

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1. The best example of a Roman Catholic historian now treating the Reformation with sympathy and without ecclesiastical bias is Father Joseph Lortz, *Die Reformation in Deutschland* (2 vols.; 4th ed.; Freiburg, 1962). This outstanding work is now available in English as *The Reformation in Germany*, translated by Ronald Walls (2 vols.; London, 1968).

2. The well-known Luther scholar and editor, Jaroslav Pelikan, describes what he calls "the tragic necessity of the Reformation" in *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism* (New York, 1959), pp. 45-57. Carl E. Braaten observes that in much of the older literature Catholics described the Reformation as a tragic revolution that led to various evils in the modern world and Protestants characterized it as an absolute necessity. Braaten argues that these two descriptions are currently being moderated and combined: "Protestants now see that the reformation was a tragedy, though it was necessary; and Roman Catholics see that it was necessary, though it was tragic," in "Rome, Reformation, and Reunion," *Una Sancta*, XXIII (1966), 5. Braaten offers a telling criticism of Protestants in the same article: "The reformation was not intended to bring about a protestant church, much less a collection of protestant churches. The reformation was necessary, but protestants have made a virtue out of a necessity" (p. 4).

characterize with confidence what these conditions were.[1] Numerous questions remain unanswered. For example, what depth of personal piety did the devotional literature of the period indicate? What was the theological outlook of sermons which the clergymen preached to local congregations and how did the people respond? Was there a difference between the well-conceived theological expression of the church and the practice of the Catholic religion on the local level? Was there an alarming amount of immorality and corruption within the Christian community as revealed by parish, city, and monastery records? What was the level of education of the average clergyman and how well could he interpret the meaning of the Christian faith to his congregation? Had superstition replaced sincere religious conviction in the lives of many parishioners? These are only a few of the questions that need to be answered by Reformation scholarship. Only after considerable effort has been devoted to detailed investigation of the sources will these answers be forthcoming.

Our present study investigates one aspect of the ecclesiastical situation--reform sentiment in the second decade of the sixteenth century. It focuses on the various concepts of reform which were proposed. Before considering these proposals it is necessary to examine three characterizations of German society which have been discussed by Reformation historians.

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[1] Frequent generalizations have been made concerning ecclesiastical conditions just prior to the Reformation, but they have been largely unsupported by solid historical evidence. As yet, no one has surveyed thoroughly the sources that must necessarily be examined before a judgment on religious life in Germany at this time can be made. Joseph Lortz discusses the problem of ecclesiastical grievances in the late Middle Ages in "Zur Problematik der kirchlichen Missstände in Spätmittelalter," Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift, LVIII (1949), 1-26, 212-227, 257-279, 347-357. Bernd Moeller proposes a flowering of the traditional forms of piety around 1500 in his "Frömmigkeit in Deutschland um 1500," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, LVI (1965), 5-31.

The first of these is the simple assertion by various historians that "the time was ripe for a reformation." Though this opinion is sometimes oversimplified, careful statements of the position merit consideration.[1] Some older historians went so far as to say that the Reformation was inevitable or a historical necessity.[1] To so argue implies that conditions were present which provided a fertile field for revolutionary change. Scholarship has not as yet specifically delineated these conditions; and, therefore, the question whether reforms were needed at this time and whether the need was more drastic than a century or more earlier has not been answered adequately.

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[1] Joseph Lortz offers such a careful statement. He points out that the failure of previous reform attempts and the countless calls for absolute obedience to the church made the situation "reif für einen radikalen Durchbruch." See Die Reformation in Deutschland, I, 11. Lortz concludes "eine radikale Revolution musste viele begeisterte Anhänger finden" (ibid.). In his interesting study of the causes of the Reformation, How the Reformation Came, translated by Otto M. Knab (New York, 1964), p. 32, Lortz cites Luther as the immediate cause of the Reformation but also notes the complex combination of causes that had come together and increased in intensity at this time. Such a situation made the coming of a "storm" an almost absolute necessity. Without these conditions preparing the way, the Reformation would not have been possible. Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York, 1920), pp. 46-47, described how the time was ripe for a reformation by using the image of a match igniting combustible material. He also used an even more striking analogy: "If we may borrow a figure from chemistry, he found public opinion a solution supersaturated with revolt; all that was needed to precipitate it was a pebble thrown in, but instead of a pebble he added the most powerful reagent possible" (p. 62). Ranke said that "Luther's daring assault was the shock which awakened Germany from her slumber," History of the Reformation in Germany, translated by Sarah Austin, edited by Robert A. Johnson (New York, 1905), p. 155. In a recent book, A.G. Dickens again makes use of the image of the match: "Whatever the stature of its titans, a turmoil so widespread and so profound as this could not have arisen through any such simple agents. A flaming brand thrown into a heap of wet straw will hardly cause a smouldering. To explain the astonishing

The second characterization is to describe this period of German history as one of general decline and corruption in

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swiftness of the conflagration which followed Luther's defiance, we must begin by describing the climactic conditions which had made the straw of European society as dry as tinder," Reformation and Society in Sixteenth Century Europe ("History of European Civilization Library"; New York, 1967), p. 11.

[1] H.C. Lea described the inevitability of the Reformation in the older "Cambridge Modern History": "The combination of all these factors rendered an explosion inevitable, and Germany was predestined to be its scene. The ground was better prepared for it there than elsewhere, by the deeper moral and religious earnestness of the people and by the tendencies of the academies and associations with which society was honeycombed." See "Cambridge Modern History," vol. I: The Renaissance edited by A.W. Ward, G.W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (New York, 1907), p. 686. Johannes Haller likewise argued that the Reformation was a historical necessity: "Such events as the German Reformation run their course from intrinsic necessity, and with Luther especially one gets the impression, as of few other men, that he could not have acted otherwise than he did," The Epochs of German History, translated by E.W. Dickes (New York, 1930), p. 125. The most prominent of recent historians who continue to adhere to a kind of historical determinism is Joseph Lortz who concludes "that a revolt against the Church could hardly have been avoided any longer. A 'reformation' had become a historical necessity" (How the Reformation Came, p. 110). According to Lortz, the split had been in the making for a long time and only a small step would be required for many to separate themselves from the church. It was "precisely because the split was latent, Luther's blow fell with such devastating force" (ibid., pp. 110-111).

religious and political affairs.[1] Such an assertion needs cautious examination in terms of historical evidence. A general decline is very difficult to document, requiring more than citations from sources of the period which say that conditions were getting worse. It requires careful assessment of conditions as they actually existed in two different periods. Since a detailed evaluation of our period is lacking, the unqualified assertion that the church was becoming increasingly corrupt remains unsubstantiated. While the existence of a decline in religious affairs may be questioned, scholars tend to agree that the need for church reform remained.[1] One possible manifestation of this need was the confusion and uncertainty about religious questions in the minds of many of the people.[2] If such uncertainty existed it might well have played a role in the success of the Reformation.

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[1] Karl Griewank describes this period as one in which morality and institutions experienced general decay. He points to a desire for reform of the Reich, the church, and morality. See Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff (Weimar, 1955), p. 75. V.H.H. Green, Renaissance and Reformation: A Survey of European History between 1450 and 1600 (London, 1952), p. 112, says that the situation of the church was much worse in 1500 than in 1400, though his judgment is substantiated only in the most general way. This idea of a decline is now being called into question. Erich Hassinger, Das Werden des neuzeitlichen Europa 1300-1600 ("Geschichte der Neuzeit," vol. I; Braunschweig, 1959), p. 5, expresses his reservations that the discontent was widening and deepening. Henri Daniel-Rops, The Protestant Reformation, translated by Audrey Butler ("History of the Church of Christ," vol. IV; New York, 1961), p. 295, denies that the need for reform was any greater in Germany than elsewhere in Christendom. Owen Chadwick agrees that the abuses existed but questions whether they were any worse than before: "Most of the abuses were not so much worse. What was new was the extent of man's awareness of the defects in church order and the possibility of remedy." See The Reformation ("Pelican History of the Church," vol. III; Baltimore, 1964), p. 22.

Scholarly discussions of the decline of religion and the need for reform sometimes leave the impression of nearly total depravity within the church. Some historians attempt to correct this idea by demonstrating that the period preceding the Reformation was marked by religious strength and not religious weakness. They describe the period as a time of great religious vitality,[1] pointing to the widespread desire for reform as evidence for their assertion.[2] Thus the

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[1] H.C. Lea summarized this position: "That a reform of the Church in its head and its members was necessary had long been generally conceded. For more than a century Europe had been clamouring for it" (The Renaissance, p. 677). Johannes Haller suggests that the church was losing her former respect so that "there was a widespread rejection of the claim of the clergy and the church to dominate public and private life" (Epochs of German History, p. 112). Recent Catholic scholarship admits the situation called for reform. Since this reform was not brought about by the church, the need was created for a more revolutionary movement. See, for example, Yves M.J. Congar, "Church Reform and Luther's Reformation, 1517-1967," Lutheran World, XIV (1967), 356. Henri Daniel-Rops, The Catholic Reformation, translated by John Warrington ("History of the Church of Christ," vol. V; New York, 1962), admits the need for reform but argues that the desire and ability to bring it about were present in the Catholic church. Catholic reform was within the ancient tradition while "Protestantism marks a complete break in the history of Christendom" (p. 2).

[2] Johannes Janssen portrayed the period as marked by perplexity and confusion "such as commonly precede all great revolutions in history." See History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages, translated by A.M. Christie, et. al., (16 vols.; London, 1896-1910), II, 304. More recently, Joseph Lortz has written that there "existed in the late Middle Ages a dangerous theological uncertainty of such a degree that it was relatively easy for a theologically independent man to become a heretic" (How the Reformation Came, p. 63).

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[1] Gerhard Ritter has argued most persuasively for this position. For his view, see "Why the Reformation Occurred in Germany," Church History, XXVII (1958), 99-106, translated from the original "Kirche und geistiges Leben in Deutschland um 1517," chap. eight of Die Neugestaltung Europas im 16. Jahrhundert: Die kirchlichen und staatlichen Wandlungen im Zeitalter der Reformation und der Glaubenskämpfe (Berlin, 1950), by G.H. Nadel. Also see Ritter's Die Weltwirkung der Reformation (2d ed.; München, 1959), pp. 32-46, "Die geistigen Ursachen der Reformation." For a more complete survey of piety and lay religion see Willy Andreas, Deutschland vor der Reformation (5th ed.; Stuttgart, 1948), pp. 147-224, "Laienfrömmigkeit und Volksreligiosität." Ritter's argument is important enough to merit summary. Ecclesiastical criticism in the early sixteenth century can be interpreted as demonstrating a lively interest in religion rather than an irreligious age. Ritter ascribes to the Germans the "anger of disillusioned love." Throughout Germany there were pious men and women who realized the corruption and decay in the church and who quietly practiced a deep inward religion waiting for reform. The church was unsatisfying to them because it did not meet them on the level of their personal piety. Though criticism was expressed, skepticism of Christian ideals was not present in Germany as it was in Italy. Karl Brandi argues that the Roman church was outwardly stronger at this time than ever before. See Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation und Gegenreformation (München, 1960), p. 42. It is interesting to note that over fifty years ago Johannes Haller had been describing the religious vitality of the time in Die Ursachen der Reformation (Tübingen, 1917), p. 15. The older, but still classic, statement was by Janssen. In his History of the German People he wrote: "In Germany the Church still stood erect in the full vigour of life. The Christian spirit and reverent piety still shone out brightly in all classes of society, in families and associations. Nevertheless there were signs already at the end of the fifteenth century of a decrease of faith, and of confusion of mind concerning the doctrines and the worship of the Church" (II, 302).

[2] Perhaps the best-known of this group is Roland Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston, 1952), p. 21: "This was the situation on the eve of the sixteenth century. All serious spirits were disturbed and recognized the need for reform." Owen Chadwick writes: "At the beginning of the sixteenth century everyone that mattered in the Western Church was crying out for reformation" (The Reformation, p. 11). Gerhard Ritter, Die Weltwirkung der Reformation, p. 39,

Reformation possibly came about because of the religious vitality of the time rather than as the result of corruption.[1] The failure of the Catholic church to live up to its ideals has also been suggested as still another contributing factor.[2] Certainly the ecclesiastical situation in Germany was mixed and not as deplorable as earlier Protestant scholarship

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describes the extent to which the question of the reform of the church "stirred all hearts": "So war die ganze deutsche Welt schon lange vor der Reformation erfüllt von leidenschaftlichen kirchlichen-religiösen Interessen, aber auch von heftiger Kritik an der Kirche als Institution. Die Frage nach ihrer Reform bewegte alle Herzen, war das weitaus stärkste öffentliche Interesse in allen Ständen, vom einfachen Bauersmann bis in die Sphäre der höchsten Bildung." Roman Catholics, in general, agree on the extent of reform sentiment though they tend to see it as a natural expression of the vitality of the Catholic church that was disrupted by the drastic and revolutionary turn of events known as the Reformation. See Bihlmeyer, Church History, III, 1-2, 6-7; Daniel-Rops, Protestant Reformation, p. 274; and Philip Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation (Garden City, New York, 1957), pp. 76-77. Daniel-Rops bases his study of Catholic reform on the presupposition that the reform effort within the church "was undertaken, not by way of answering the 'reformers,' but in obedience to demands and principles that are part of the unalterable traditions of the Church and proceed from her most fundamental loyalties" (Catholic Reformation, p. 1). See also Janssen's History of the German People, I, 7; II, 293; III, 184-185.

[1] So argues Émile G. Léonard, The Reformation, translated by Joyce M.H. Reid ("A History of Protestantism," vol. I; London, 1965), p. 4: "I must emphasize at the outset--for it is one of the basic principles and guiding themes of this book--that the Reformation, far more than a revolt against Catholic faith, was its culmination and its full flowering."

[2] Erwin Iserloh illustrates this failure by referring to a growing secularization of indulgences which raised suspicions of financial exploitation in the minds of the people. See Luther zwischen Reform und Reformation ("Katholisches Leben und Kämpfen im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung," vols. XXIII-XXIV; Münster, 1967), p. 21.

had depicted.[1] ~~Irregardless~~ Regardless of whether there had been a decline in religious affairs, it is argued that decay or corruption in the life of the church was neither the direct nor principal cause of the Reformation because the movement was more than an attempt to correct immorality or existing abuses.[2]

Obviously, religious considerations loomed large in the decision-making of the sixteenth century. However, the trend in Reformation scholarship is toward investigation of factors other than religious ones. This leads to the third general characterization of German society, namely, that non-religious factors aided the development and success of the Reformation. These political, social, and economic considerations have been stressed, sometimes to the exclusion of religious issues.[3]

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1. John Dolan describes the late Middle Ages as "a strange mixture of faith and irreverence, ceremonial usage and immorality" (History of the Reformation, p. 185).

2. Haller, Epochs of German History, p. 106. For more recent expression of similar opinion see Hassinger, Das Werden des neuzeitlichen Europa, p. 5: "Das Phänomen Reformation lässt sich nicht allein aus den Missständen erklären." Myron D. Gilmore, The World of Humanism ("The Rise of Modern Europe"; New York, 1962), p. 175. See also Chadwick, The Reformation, p. 22: "The Reformation came not so much because Europe was irreligious as because it was religious."

3. Although few scholars have gone so far as to suggest that religion played no role in the Reformation, it has been noted that the importance of religious considerations has been exaggerated. H.C. Lea, for example, writes that "the motives, both remote and proximate, which led to the Lutheran revolt were largely secular rather than spiritual." (The Renaissance, p. 653). He later adds: "Thus we may reasonably conclude that in its essence the Reformation was due more largely to financial than to religious considerations" (p. 667).

There can be little doubt that the Reformation was blessed by propitious political circumstances. Therefore, the question arises as to the relationship between political and religious motivation in the controversy.[1] Among the political factors that aided the progress of the Reformation was the rising resistance to the pope in Germany as the result of a growing feeling of nationalism. This incipient nationalism was expressed in opposition to Rome; but, in the absence of a unifying secular leader, opposition remained fragmented in the hands of territorial princes. The effectiveness of this opposition suffered from the division of political power. Neither a reformed church nor an enlivened national state could develop without a strong leader who "would have been able to revive the ancient opposition to the papacy, and to inspire his people with a new life founded upon religious ideas."[2] In other words, both church and state might have been revitalized at the same time, but as it was, neither could be improved effectively.

Another suggested political factor was the failure of the state to support and protect the church as ardently as before. Because critics no longer feared the wrath of the state, they attacked the church more vehemently.[3]

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[1] The pioneering suggestions in this area were made by Leopold von Ranke who wrote the first History of the Reformation in Germany based on research in political sources and including discussions of political influences and issues.

[2] Ibid., pp. 157-158.

[3] Haller, Ursachen der Reformation, p. 28.

Political confusion and ferment marked public affairs in the first years of the sixteenth century. Germany had not yet become a nation in the modern sense even though the term "German nation" was present in the literature of the period. No political entity or institution existed to which the term could be applied with validity. Geographical areas of sovereignty fit together like tiny pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and the confusion was compounded when political and ecclesiastical boundaries overlapped. Territorial principalities struggled to retain their independence and achieve a position of relative strength. In later years this allowed for a greater diversity of religious doctrine and practice in Germany than elsewhere in Europe.[1]

Another political factor that aided the Reformation was the favor it received from the secular princes. Without the political support and protection of certain crucial figures, neither Luther nor the Reformation would have succeeded.[2] Had not Frederick had some interest in reform or in protecting the people of his area, Luther's career might have ended soon after the Diet of Worms.

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[1] Ranke, History of the Reformation in Germany, p. 128. The best discussions of German political development available in English are those by Geoffrey Barraclough, The Origins of Modern Germany (Oxford, 1947), and Hajo Holborn, A History of Modern Germany (3 vols.; vol. I: "The Reformation"; New York, 1959-1969).

[2] G.R. Elton (ed.), The Reformation, 1520-1559 ("The New Cambridge Modern History," vol. II; Cambridge, 1958), p. 5: "The Reformation was successful beyond the dreams of the earlier, potentially similar, movements not so much because (as the phrase goes) the time was ripe for it, but rather because it found favour with the secular arm. Desire for Church lands, resistance to imperial and papal claims, the ambition to create self-contained and independent states, all played their part in this, but so quite often did a genuine attachment to the teachings of the reformers."

Social conflict was another non-religious factor that lent support to the reform sentiment of the day as various groups struggled to hold or attain a place in society. The nobility and the clergy were solidly established while the middle classes and the peasants fought persistently for rank in the social hierarchy. At the same time, the loss of useful function in society had serious effects upon the knightly class. Although the knights fought desperately to hold on to the past, a changing society passed them by. By the standards of the day, a revolutionary spirit in social, political, and religious affairs infused the early years of the sixteenth century.[1] This conflict attained added significance in the course of the Reformation when various streams of reform sentiment appeared to unite, increasing the impact of the desire for reform.[2]

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[1] Daniel-Rops, The Protestant Reformation, pp. 290-298, and Harold J. Grimm, The Reformation Era, 1500-1650 (rev. ed.; New York, 1966), pp. 27-32. See also Grimm's presidential address to the American Society of Church History, December 28, 1961, "Social Forces in the German Reformation," Church History, XXXI (1962), 3-13.

[2] Franz Lau and Ernst Bizer, Reformationsgeschichte Deutschlands bis 1555 ("Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte," vol. III, K, edited by Kurt Dietrich Schmidt and Ernst Wolf; Göttingen, 1964), p. 4. James Mackinnon in The Origins of the Reformation (London, 1939), p. 412, points out that for many the reform of the church necessarily involved the reform of social conditions for which they held both church and state responsible. Gerhard Ritter comments on the hopelessness of the struggle until the Reich could become more effective: "Vor allem der Kampf gegen die übermässige Ausdehnung

To the factors which aided the Reformation must be added economic forces in German life at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Reformation scholarship had already noted the role of economic considerations, but the recent flourishing of Marxist literature has brought added importance to this discussion. The issue has changed from the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism to the investigation of the economic condition and motivation of certain groups of reformers.[1]

We have attempted to place our study of reform sentiment into the context of the state of scholarship on the crucial issue of ecclesiastical conditions in Germany on the eve of the Reformation. The next chapter provides a brief phenomenology of ecclesiastical reform. Our attention now turns to the particular aspect of the ecclesiastical situation we have investigated--the concept of church reform. Throughout the study the idea of reform is approached from two angles.

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geistlicher Gerichtsbarkeit und den Ämterschacher an der Kurie war aussichtslos, solange das Reich als Ganzes sich nicht zu tatkräftigem Handeln aufraffen konnte. Kirchen und Reichsreform waren deshalb bis in die zwanziger Jahre, eng miteinander verbunden, die Forderung des Tages," (Die Neugestaltung Europas im 16. Jahrhundert, p. 61).

[1] For a briefly annotated bibliography of those who discuss the economic, social, and political factors involved in the Reformation see Lewis W. Spitz (ed.), The Reformation: Material or Spiritual? ("Problems in European Civilization," edited by Ralph W. Greenlaw and Dwight E. Lee; Boston, 1962), pp. 101-102. Douglas C. Stange, "A Marxist De-Lutheranization of the German Reformation," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVIII (1967), 596-600, discusses the literature that makes Müntzer the hero of the Reformation.

On one hand is a quantitative approach attempting to discover how widespread was the desire for reform. On the other hand is a qualitative approach to analyze the various concepts of reform which were proposed.

Chapter II

PHENOMENOLOGY OF REFORM

Brief attention must be given to another problem that faces historians who investigate the subject of church reform--how to define the concept of reform. Some attempt at this difficult task of definition is necessary before this study can proceed.

Church reform means more than the criticism of ecclesiastical conditions. More is involved in reform than assailing ecclesiastical abuses and urging their correction, though that may be included.[1] But beyond this, a working definition of reform must be proposed. Gerhard B. Ladner has devoted a great deal of effort to this process of definition with particular reference to the early church. He writes: "The idea of reform may now be defined as the idea of a free, intentional and ever perceptible, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated effort by man to reassert and augment values pre-existent in the spiritual-material compound of the world."[1] However, his definition lacks the clarity or preciseness necessary to make it completely acceptable.

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[1] Heiko A. Oberman is quite correct when he writes: "In the first place it should be clear that to endow a medieval preacher or doctor with the title of Forerunner, on the grounds that he assailed ecclesiastical abuses or called for reform, violates both the medieval _and_ the Reformation understanding of the word 'reformation'." See _Forerunners of the Reformation_ (New York, 1966), p. 9.

Another attempt to characterize reform comes in a perceptive article by Peter Brunner in which he sets out six basic elements of the concept of reformation in the history of the church: (1) reformation is an occurrence that is founded and continues in the essence of the church; (2) reformation is expressed in the historical existence of the church; (3) reformation does not change dogmas but it changes their interpretation; (4) the historical form of a dogma may be changed by a reformation; (5) reformation is an occurrence in the church by which the unchangeable essence of the church is formed in its definite place in ecclesiastical and universal history; (6) reformation can take many historical forms.[2]

Brunner also provides a solid definition of the ecclesiological meaning of reform during the Middle Ages:

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[1] Gerhard B. Ladner, The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 35. The most thorough discussion of the concept of reform from a Catholic viewpoint comes from the pen of Yves M.J. Congar, Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'église (Paris, 1950). According to the Catholic tradition, as Congar understands it, reform should be of the life of the church and not of its structure. In his view, this is where the Protestants erred. See especially pp. 356-367.

[2] "Reform--Reformation, Einst--Heute: Elemente eines ökumenischen Dialoges im 450. Gedächtnisjahr von Luthers Ablassthesen," Kerygma und Dogma, XIII (1967), 164-165.

> The basic ecclesiological meaning of the word reformatio as it appears with varied nuances during the Middle Ages is that an originally valid norm for church life and canonical law ought again to become valid in practice in order to overcome certain distortions and perversions. A deepened concept of reform also asserted itself at the close of the Middle Ages. Since the reformatio had failed at the top, it was to begin farther down, with the members, by means of a deepened concern for the salvation of souls--one's own and those of others.[1]

Somewhat similar is the definition by Robert E. McNally: "In its deepest meaning reformation is a process, an event, a happening: the discovery and restoration of the image of Christ in the Church."[2] To these attempts at definition should be added the basic idea of a return to earlier norms or standards which is the literal meaning of the Latin verb reformare.[3]

Rather than attempt an abstract definition of reformation, it is perhaps more instructive to attempt a phenomenology of reform. Since reform has been a standard ingredient in church history, a necessary part of our task is to outline the recurring themes of ecclesiastical reform and the significant variations of those themes. The following brief survey provides the historical background or context of the discussion of reform in our period. Two basic themes or approaches to reform come immediately to mind: individual reform and institutional reform.[1] These themes are illustrated in the material that follows by referring to various expressions of reform in the history of the church.

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[1] "Reform or Reformation?" Lutheran World, XIV (1967), 360.

[2] "The Dynamics of True Reform," The American Ecclesiastical Review, CLVIII (1968), 192.

[3] See Harper's Latin Dictionary, edited by E.A. Andrews, rev. by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (New York, 1907), pp. 769, 1528, 1547. This aspect of reformation is noted abundantly in the literature. See Walter von Loewenich, "Reformation oder Revolution," in Von Augustine zu Luther ("Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte"; Witten, 1959), p. 250. W. Maurer discusses the definition of reform in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, edited by Kurt Galling (3rd ed.; Tübingen, 1957-1962), V, 859. Cf. Stephanus Pfürtner, "Reform and Reformation," Lutheran World, XIV (1967), 333.

A. Individual Reform

One stream of reform has asserted that the only effective way to bring about reform of the church is to reform individuals.[2] Various figures or movements have advocated this solution to the problems facing the church. As early as the time of the Greek Fathers "the possibility of man's return to a condition of integrity and innocence corresponding to that of Adam before the fall" was argued as an option. This Eastern reform tradition contained three basic elements: the return to paradise, the restoration of the divine image in man, and the ultimate eschatological reform.[1]

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[1] Dolan, History of the Reformation.

[2] McNally, "The Dynamics of True Reform," p. 196: "To the Catholic of the 16th century reform was largely, if not exclusively, an individual matter. The Church, it was thought, would be renewed when each individual member of it was renewed. The Church as a whole is only as healthy as the individual parts."

Monasticism was another expression of individual reform. Augustine was the first to depict monasticism as the ideal way to bring about Christian reform because it was the way of life which was the model for the city of God.[2] Throughout the Middle Ages the monks continued to play an important role in church reform. A stricter adherence to the Benedictine Rule was often used as a device for reform when abuses and corruption began to creep into the monasteries.[3] The Cluniac reform began in the early tenth century and affected positively the life of the whole church.[4] In the thirteenth century the Franciscans and the Dominicans attempted to revitalize the life of the church. The Franciscans emphasized simplicity and a life of poverty, and the Dominicans likewise took vows of poverty. Their purpose was to preach to heretics and the heathen in missionary causes.[5] This attempt at reform

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1. Dolan, History of the Reformation, p. 66. On this eschatological element and social thought, see Ray C. Petry, Christian Eschatology and Social Thought (New York, 1956).

2. Dolan, History of the Reformation, p. 71.

3. On the Benedictines see Edward Cuthbert Butler, Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule (Cambridge, 1961), and Lowrie J. Daly, Benedictine Monasticism: Its Formation and Development through the Twelfth Century (New York, 1965).

4. For a discussion of the Cluniac reform, see Daly, Benedictine Monasticism, pp. 152-165. Also consult Joachim Wollasch, Hans-Erich Mager, and Hermann Diener, Neue Forschungen über Cluny und die Cluniacenser (Freiburg, 1959).

5. Ralph Francis Bennett discusses the Dominicans in The Early Dominicans ("Studies in Medieval Life and Thought"; Cambridge, 1937). For bibliography on St. Francis and reform, see below p. 23, footnote 2.

by new orders of dedicated individuals persisted throughout the Middle Ages and was one aspect of the Catholic reform movement in the sixteenth century.[1]

Among the monastic reformers St. Francis was one of the finest examples of personal or individual reform. The essence of his reform was the rebirth of individuals by the imitation of Christ, in particular his life of poverty. This rebirth or renewal of individuals would lead to reform of the church. St. Francis and his followers had profound impact and influence on the direction the church was to take, although from a modern viewpoint his program might appear simplistic, if not naive.[2]

In the fourteenth century this emphasis on individual reform was carried on by John Wyclif who believed that the church was not the salt of the earth as it was intended to be. Wyclif, who also sought an institutional reform of the church, based his individual reform on the Bible, the law of the gospel (lex evangelica), and on following Christ in poverty and humility. It was his desire that Christians live an

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1. Daniel-Rops offers a brief discussion of these new orders in The Catholic Reformation, pp. 21-25.

2. On St. Francis as an "apostle of poverty" see Ray C. Petry, Francis of Assisi (rev. ed.; Durham, North Carolina, 1964). For St. Francis' view of reform see Gerhard B. Ladner, "Reformatio," in Ecumenical Dialogue at Harvard--The Roman Catholic-Protestant Colloquium, edited by Samuel H. Miller and G. Ernest Wright (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 189-190, and Konrad Burdach, Reformation, Renaissance, Humanismus (2d ed.; Berlin, 1926), p. 39. Burdach (pp. 49-52) ascribes a somewhat similar view to Dante. The historian should use the Burdach item with care.

apostolic life based on the law of God.[1]

In the fifteenth century three important streams of individual reform appeared. The Brethren of the Common Life experienced their strongest period of growth and influence in the fifteenth century, although their history reaches back into the fourteenth century. The Brethren sought to serve God and to lead their neighbors to seek salvation and purity of heart. Their religious life was a kind of practical mysticism with a strong emphasis on education.[2] Some scholarly effort has been directed at demonstrating the influence of the Brethren on the Reformation, but it is difficult to demonstrate any concrete effects of the Brethren on the period under consideration in this study.[3]

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[1] Gustav Adolf Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar ("Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte," vol. XXXVI; Berlin, 1966), p. 123, 336, 62, 197.

[2] Albert Hyma, The Christian Renaissance (2d ed.; Hamden, Conn., 1965). Paul Joachimsen, "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, VIII (1930), 454, argues that the Brethren did not use Christian antiquity as a norm and were no more than a typically medieval attempt at reform.

[3] In Humanismus und Renaissance (2 vols.; "Deutsche Literatur Sammlung literarischer Kunst- und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen," vol. VI; Leipzig, 1938), I, 16-17, Hans Rupprich cites four important fifteenth or sixteenth century figures who arose out of the schools and influence of the Brethren: Thomas Kempis, Nicholas of Cusa, Rudolf Agricola, and Erasmus. Hyma attempts to prove that Erasmus and Luther were dependent on the Brethren (The Christian Renaissance, pp. 228-229, 309-322). For the influence of the Brethren on Erasmus, see Paul Mestwerdt, Die Anfänge des Erasmus: Humanismus und "Devotio Moderna" ("Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte der Reformation," vol. II; Leipzig, 1917). In "Patterns of Salvation in the First Age of the Reformation,"

The second stream of individual reform in the fifteenth century had to do with the practical life of the church, the improvement of pastoral care. Three ecclesiastical figures of the century stand out as particularly influential in endeavors for church reform on the local or pastoral level. They were John Gerson, Pierre d'Ailly, and Nicholas of Cusa. In addition to their interest in the institutional reform of the church, they were dedicated to the reform of education and morality, particularly among the clergy, so that pastoral care throughout the church might be strengthened and thus individuals reformed. However, their endeavors were hindered by their own involvement in the system they were attacking. Each of them played a significant role in church reform, but their efforts had little permanent success and only minor influence in our period.[1]

Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, LVII (1966), 55, Gordon Rupp asserts that "the debt of Erasmus's 'Enchiridion' to the 'modern devotion' is obvious."

[1] On Gerson, see James Louis Connolly, John Gerson, Reformer and Mystic (Louvain, 1928), and John Brimyard Morrall, Gerson and the Great Schism (Manchester, England, 1960). For the most recent edition of Gerson's writings, see Oeuvres complètes, edited by P. Glorieux (7 vols.; Paris, 1960ff). On d'Ailly, the work by Francis Oakley, The Political Thought of Pierre d'Ailly (New Haven, 1964), is particularly helpful. Cf. the same author's "The Propositiones Utiles of Pierre d'Ailly: An Epitome of Conciliar Theory," Church History, XXIX (1960), 398-403, which includes an important translation from d'Ailly. There is no edition of d'Ailly's works. Some tracts were published in the old edition of Gerson, Opera omnia, edited by E. du Pin (Antwerp, 1728). See especially the "Tractatus de reformatione," II, cols. 903-916. On Gerson and Cusa see Dolan, History of the Reformation, "Two Reformers who failed," pp. 139-183. For a discussion of Cusa's unsuccessful attempt at church reform as Bishop of

The third fifteenth century impetus to individual reform came from humanism which was developing into a movement of influential proportions. It would infuse a new spirit of inquiry and a new approach into the ecclesiastical situation. The importance of humanist activity can be seen by noting the number of cities and universities with which it came into contact including Basel, Strassburg, Schlettstadt, Augsburg, Nürnberg, Cologne, Heidelberg, Erfurt, Tübingen, Ingolstadt, Leipzig, and Vienna.[1] The humanists' expression of church reform was the one which most nearly fulfilled the narrow definition of the word reformare.

This brief chronological survey has illustrated the continued presence of a tendency to think of reform in an individual sense. It is the view which says that men's hearts must be changed before the institutions to which they belong can be changed. There was, however, a second major approach to church reform which conceived of the necessary changes coming only by a remaking of the institution from the top down. This view held that improvements could be made

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Brixen, see Pardon E. Tillinghast, "Nicholas of Cusa vs. Sigmund of Hapsburg: an Attempt at Post-Conciliar Church Reform," Church History, XXXVI (1967), 371-390. On Cusa as a reformer, see Erwin Iserloh, Reform der Kirche bei Nikolaus von Kues ("Institut für Europäische Geschichte," no. 38; Wiesbaden, 1965).

1. Rupprich, Humanismus und Renaissance, II, 5-54. Rupprich's two volumes are very helpful because they provide brief introductions and selections from the most important primary sources for the development of humanism in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

only by restructuring the organization which was too powerful for individual good intentions to overcome.

B. Institutional Reform

In the eleventh century, in a development related to the Cluniac reform, Pope Gregory VII was instrumental in stressing the concept of reform in an institutional rather than individual sense. Reform had been considered in terms of individual persons or orders with "no full realization that the Church as a whole might be in need of reform."[1] Gregory's centralization of the church in Rome and in the papacy was a new kind of reform endeavor in response to conditions that required a new approach.[2]

An important part of the movement toward institutional reform, particularly in the later Middle Ages, was a desire to limit the expression of papal power in non-spiritual matters. For both political and religious reasons some critics questioned the political power and material interest of the papacy. Marsilius of Padua, William Occam, and John Wyclif are representatives of this attempt to limit the power of the pope to spiritual or ecclesiastical concerns, but their endeavors achieved few permanent results as is demonstrated by the abuses of the Renaissance papacy.[1] Marsilius believed that the church had to be subordinate to the state in all temporal questions.[2] Occam argued in vain for a similar limitation of papal powers.[3] For Wyclif, the worldly power and material possessions amply demonstrated the need for the papacy and the church to be recalled to its original spiritual purpose as ordained by God.[1] According to Karl Griewank, this kind of approach to reform came to a position of dominance in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[2]

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[1] Gerhard Ladner, "Reformatio," p. 172. Cf. Dolan, History of the Reformation, "From Individual to Institutional Reform," pp. 64-104.

[2] For an extensive discussion of the Gregorian reform, see Augustin Fliche, La réforme Grégorienne (2 vols.; "Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense," nos. 6, 9; Louvain, 1924-1925).

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[1] On the Renaissance papacy see Ludwig Pastor, The History of the Popes, edited by Frederick Ignatius Antrobus, Ralph Francis Kerr, and Ernest Graf (29 vols.; London, 1938ff). Vols. 1-8 cover the papacy from 1305 to 1521. See also F.X. Seppelt, Das Papsttum in Spätmittelalter und in der Zeit der Renaissance ("Geschichte des Papsttums," vol. IV; Leipzig, 1941).

[2] On Marsilius of Padua see the 2 volume work by Alan Gewirth, Marsilius of Padua: The Defender of Peace ("Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies," vol. XLVI; New York, 1951). Vol. I discusses "Marsilius of Padua and Medieval Political Philosophy." See especially Gewirth's explanation of Marsilius' view that the church must be subject to the authority of the government in both temporal and social questions (I, 300). Cf. ". . . the invariant aspect of Marsilianism was the complete subordination in temporal affairs of the 'church' to the 'state,' the removal of all temporal power from the priesthood" (I, 302). Vol. II is the translation of the Defensor Pacis. See especially II, 113-126.

[3] On Occam see P. Adalbert Hamman, La doctrine de l'église et de l'état chez Occam ("Études de science religieuse," no. 1; Paris, 1942), pp. 51-66. Leon Baudry, Guillaume d'Occam ("Études de philosophie medievale," vol. XXXIX; Paris, 1949). Richard Scholz, Wilhelm von Ockham als politischer Denker und sein Breviloquium de principatu tyrannica ("Schriften des Reichsinstituts für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde," vol. VIII; Stuttgart, 1952). Wilhelm Kölmel, Wilhelm Ockham und seine kirchenpolitischen Schriften (Essen, 1962), pp. 56-61. For Occam's own writings on this subject see William Occam, Breviloquium de potestate papae, edited by Leon Baudry ("Études de philosophie medievale," vol. XXIV; Paris, 1937). William Occam, Opera plurima (London, 1962), vol. I: "Dialogus de imperio et pontificia potestate." William Occam, Opera politica, edited by J.G. Sikes, B.L. Manning, R.F. Bennett, H.S. Offler, and R.H. Snape (3 vols.; "Publications of the University of Manchester," no. CCLXXIII; Manchester, England, 1940).

The fifteenth century was a vocal period in expressing desire for church reform.[3] Institutional reform, in its conciliar manifestation, was given ample opportunity to achieve results. This effort to reform the church by general councils was basically unsuccessful. The dual goals of conciliarism--unification and reformation of the church--were only partially fulfilled. The church was externally unified by the

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1. Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, pp. 39, 44, 61, 309. On Wyclif see the standard biography by Herbert B. Workman, John Wyclif (2 vols.; Oxford, 1926), and the work by a Jesuit, Lowrie J. Daly, The Political Theory of John Wyclif (Chicago, 1962). Basic primary sources by Wyclif are the Tractatus de ecclesia, edited by Johann Loserth, (London, 1886), and Tractatus de potestate pape, edited by Johann Loserth, (London, 1907).

2. Karl Griewank, Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff, pp. 44ff. "Sie dreht sich nicht nur um die politische Universalgewalt des Papsttums und sein Verhältnis zum 'weltlichen Schwert' überhaupt, sondern um das Recht auf die materiellen Güter und Befugnisse, die 'Temporalien' der Kirche in den einzelnen Ländern; sie richtet sich zugunsten gefestiger territorialer Staatsgebilde gegen die Zentralisierungstendenzen der mit neuen administrativen Ansprüchen und mit den Mitteln des Handels und Leihkapitalismus vorgehenden Papstkirche" (p. 45).

3. For a discussion of the concept of reformatio in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Will-Erich Peuckert, Die Grosse Wende: Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther (Hamburg, 1948), pp. 195-234. Note his view of reformatio as hope, p. 198: "Die reformatio ist eine Hoffnung, der Menschen des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts, ist die Anweisung auf den Morgen."

restoration of obedience to only one pope, instead of the three that had claimed power. However, the few reforms that the councils attempted were not long-lasting. Some minor improvements were achieved, but on the whole the conciliar reformers learned the disturbing lesson that affairs tended to revert to their previous condition soon after the council was disbanded. The church appeared to be on the verge of a significant change, but the warnings of men like d'Ailly and Gerson went unheeded. The desire for frequent councils was not met, and soon the papacy was clearly the superior power once again.[1]

Another aspect of institutional reform which appeared at various times in the history of the church was the feeling that church reform was the task of the sovereign. Friedrich Heer has discussed the ideas of rebirth or reform with particular reference to the Carolingian and Ottonian renaissances. One facet of the Carolingian Renaissance was the conviction that, if necessary, the sovereign must take the initiative in reform. The Ottonian Renaissance provided a variation of this in which both the emperor and the pope were expected to participate in the restitutio-reformatio-reparatio of the church. The principal task was the rebirth of a fallen world or decaying cosmos, a task which included the renovatio ecclesiae in regnum et sacerdotium. This view of reform in which the emperor was to play a prominent role remained as one alternative throughout the Middle Ages.[1]

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[1] Dolan, History of the Reformation, "Conciliarism as Reform," pp. 105-138. For a background study of conciliarism, see Brian Tierney, Foundations of the Conciliar Theory ("Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought," n.s. vol. IV; Cambridge, 1955). Ernest F. Jacob's Essays in the Conciliar Epoch (rev. ed.; Notre Dame, Indiana, 1963) has several helpful chapters on various aspects of the period. See also Matthew Spinka (ed.), Advocates of Reform from Wyclif to Erasmus ("The Library of Christian Classics," vol. XIV; Philadelphia, 1953). See especially the editor's essay, "Conciliarism as ecclesiastical reform," pp. 91-105, and the brief selections from Henry of Langenstein, John Gerson, Dietrich of Niem, and John Major (pp. 106-184). In "Unitive Reform Principles of the Late Medieval Conciliarists," Church History, XXXI (1962), 164-181, Ray C. Petry summarizes the program of the conciliarists.

Ecclesiastical reform by the sovereign made up one aspect of the desire for political reform in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries--the reform of the empire (Reichsreform). To many men in the fifteenth century, Constantine was the great Christian emperor, and they looked forward to the coming of another great emperor who would reform both the spiritual and temporal realms.[2] The Reichstag at Worms in 1495 debated the idea of Reichsreform, and the concept won much support among the princes and the estates. According to Barraclough, more was involved than a self-interested desire on the part of the princes to limit central authority; Reichsreform "reflected the genuine aspirations of the German people."[3] Cusa was convinced that it was impossible to reform the church without reforming the empire as well. The two reforms must go hand in hand and were dependent upon each other.[1]

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[1] Friedrich Heer, "Die 'Renaissance' Ideologie im frühen Mittelalter," Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, LVII (1949), 23-81.

[2] Peuckert, Die grosse Wende, p. 203.

[3] Barraclough, Origins of Modern Germany, p. 364.

Thus religious and political reform desires were combined in the concept of Reichsreform. Two fifteenth century treatises illustrate this combination of religious and political issues: the Oberrheinische Revolutionär and the Reformatio Sigismundi. The author of the Oberrheinische Revolutionär urgently described the decline in leadership of both the temporal and spiritual classes. The only hope was for the common man, the peasant, to restore the damage done by the princes and the nobles. The justice administered and practiced in earlier German history needed to be reinstituted. The author hoped that a new emperor would arise from among the peasants, an unpretentious, pious man who would call all common men to himself and with their help subdue the world. This "Emperor Frederick" would be a new Messiah and would reign a thousand years. The author's description of him was full of biblical and apochalyptic imagery.[2]

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[1] Ranke, History of the Reformation, p. 51.

[2] For brief summaries of the tract see Günther Franz, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg (2 vols.; München, 1933-1935), I, 113-115, and Griewank, Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff, p. 80. For the text see H. Haupt, "Ein oberrheinische Revolutionär aus der Zeitalter K. Maximilian I," Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst, Ergh. VIII (1893). This work was not nearly so widely known as the Reformatio Sigismundi, the second of these two important documents (Franz, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg, I, 115).

Much more important, because it was known by more people, was The Reformation of Emperor Sigismund, which Frederick von Bezold calls the first revolutionary document written and published in German.[1] The author saw that to be successful, reformation involved the purifying or improving of both the spiritual and worldly orders, not either one alone.[2] The tract made four demands of the church: (1) the clergy should have no feudal land-holdings; (2) the clergy should receive a fixed yearly income; (3) the pope, as the highest cleric, should belong to no order and his rule should be limited to the southern half of Italy; (4) the number of clergy and monks should be stabilized.[3] The Reformatio has been interpreted as the first shot in the battle leading up to the peasant wars and uprisings of the early sixteenth century.[4]

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[1] Frederick von Bezold, "Die 'armen Leute' und die deutsche Literatur des späteren Mittelalters," Historische Zeitschrift, XLI (1879), 26. For a summary of the work see Jacob S. Schapiro, Social Reform and the Reformation ("Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law," vol. XXXIV, no. 2; New York, 1909), pp. 95-98. For the text see Heinrich Werner (ed.), "Die Reformation des Kaisers Sigmund," Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, Ergh. III (1908). The most recent work on the subject, including an impressive bibliography, is by Lothar Graf zu Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi: Beiträge zum Verständnis einer Reformschrift des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts ("Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte," vol. IV; Göttingen, 1960).

[2] Peuckert, Die grosse Wende, p. 198.

[3] Heinz Kamnitzer, Zur Vorgeschichte des deutschen Bauernkrieges (Berlin, 1952), p. 53.

[4] Ibid., p. 54.

C. Reform/Rebirth and Reform/Restitution: A Problem of Semantics

Before concluding this look at the concept of reform, there are two problems of definition which must be noted. The first is the relationship between the concepts of reformation and rebirth. Konrad Burdach argues that the two come from the same central idea; the consciousness that out of the old sources of life must come a change and improvement in culture and religion.[1] Maurer agrees and notes that according to medieval usage _reformare_ is synonymous with _renovare_, _innovare_, _restituere_, _instituere_, _regenerare_, _reviviscere_, _suscitere_, _resuscitere_, _surgere_, and _renasci_.[2]

Prominent scholars have criticized Burdach so severely as to call his views into question. Gerhard Ladner rejects his identification of reform and rebirth as well as his attempt to derive the Italian Renaissance from medieval ideas of spiritual regeneration.[1] Paul Joachimsen also disagrees with this identification and additional points of Burdach's argument.[2] Wallace Ferguson correctly notes Burdach's "tendency to press every obscure reference to rebirth, reformation, or regeneration into the service of his thesis that the Renaissance was essentially the conscious rebirth of the human soul."[3] The Renaissance scholar B. L. Ullman protests that there was no single term, such as rebirth, which the humanists used to describe the situation.[4]

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[1] Burdach, _Reformation, Renaissance, Humanismus_, pp. 13, 24-25. Burdach's prime illustration, though not the only one, is Cola di Rienzo, the fourteenth century "tribune of the people" of Rome. Rienzo's control was short-lived, and he had to flee from the nobles he had earlier banished. Burdach reviews the not-too-favorable reception given his view of the Renaissance in "Die seelischen und geistigen Quellen der Renaissancebewegung," _Historische Zeitschrift_, CXLIX (1933-1934), 477-521.

[2] "Reformatio," p. 858. Maurer's linguistic argument, based on the words being used interchangeably, does not decide the issue. It is helpful to look at how certain concepts were used, but the question is far too difficult to be dealt with so simply.

The second problem of definition is the contrast some historians have drawn between reformatio and restitutio.

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[1] Gerhard Ladner, "Die mittelalterliche Reform-Idee und ihr Verhältnis zur Idee der Renaissance," Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, LX (1952), 31, and his Idea of Reform, p. 16, no. 1. Ladner lodges similar criticisms of Friedrich Heer, "Die 'Renaissance' Ideologie im frühen Mittelalter."

[2] Paul Joachimsen, "Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation," Historische Vierteljahrsschrift, XX (1920-1921), 426-470.

[3] "Humanist Views of the Renaissance," American Historical Review, XLV (1939), 2. Ferguson takes issue with the view that the revival in culture in the Renaissance was a rebirth of antiquity: "The Italian humanists thought of the civilization of their own day as a new and original creation, in many respects like that of antiquity but distinctly their own. It was, in all its aspects, the work of the Italian cities and their men of genius" (p. 28).

[4] "Renaissance: The Word and the Underlying Concept," in Studies in the Italian Renaissance ("Storia e Letteratura," vol. LI; Rome, 1955), p. 23: "It is a rather curious situation that, with all the awareness of the humanists of what was going on, no single word found general acceptance among them to describe the phenomenon. If any particular designation had become current in the early period it might have been 'Awakening.' The idea of rebirth came into use very slowly."

Franklin H. Littell, in seeking to assess the significance of the Anabaptists, has distinguished between those who desired *reformatio* and those who desired *restitutio*:

> The Anabaptist revolution within Christian history was so thoroughgoing as to be *sui generis*, and in distinguishing the church types of magesterial Protestantism from the sixteenth century beginnings of the Free Churches we may properly speak of the "Church of the Reformers" on the one hand and the "Church of the Restitution" on the other.[1]

This view has two clear weaknesses. First, more is read into the meaning of the words *reformatio* and *restitutio* than has been demonstrated to be there. Would most readers in the sixteenth century have seen such a neat distinction between the two words? Is it accurate to say that Luther's program in its essence was different from a restitutio? Secondly, when Littell says that the Anabaptists wanted a restitution of the true church while Luther and others wanted to reform it, he betrays his obvious sympathy for the former. Littell has not offered a well thought out and amply illustrated distinction which adds to our historical understanding of the situation. Rather, his distinction borders on being perjorative, implying that the Anabaptists were the ones dedicated to restoring the true church, while Luther and the magesterial reformers sought only to improve the church in a relative sense.

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[1] *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism* (New York, 1964), p. 79. Littell had earlier stated the position in "The Anabaptist Doctrine of the Restitution of the True Church," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXIV (1950), 33-52. George H. Williams reveals his similar attitude when he writes: "It is useful to observe that the established and protected churches, both Protestant and Catholic, were, so to speak, churches of the exigent present, and therefore disposed to compromise and accomodation out of a basically conservative social concern to prevent any radical dissociation of citizenship (in civil society) and membership (in the church of the masses). The proponents of the Radical Reformation, having been inspired by the Protestant Reformers to look back to the church of the apostolic past, yearned to restore it unambiguously in their midst." See his introduction in George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (eds.), *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* ("Library of Christian Classics," vol. XXV; Philadelphia, 1957), p. 22. Frank J. Wray, "The Anabaptist Doctrine of the Restitution of the Church," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXVIII (1954), 186-196, states the position more moderately. He admits that the difference between *restitutio* and *reformatio* is one of degree and not of kind. However, "both points of view aimed at removing corruptions, but they reflect differences of opinion as to how early the fall took place and how drastic the effects were" (p. 186). The persuasiveness of his case is lessened when he admits that "although it appears that the term was employed more frequently by those on the fringe of Anabaptism than by representatives of the main stream of the movement, it represents, nevertheless, an attitude which pervaded the whole movement" (p. 187).

The specific purpose of the following chapters is to discover what ecclesiastical reform proposals were made in Germany in the second decade of the sixteenth century. These reform proposals will not be judged by any standard from outside their historical context, that is, by any preconceived or predetermined categories of reform movements. The purpose of this study is not to write one chapter of the history of reformatio but to analyze reform sentiment as one aspect of the historical situation in early sixteenth century Germany. However, a secondary part of our conclusion will be to see how the concepts of reform in our period fit into the pattern of previous ideas of reform. Was a new idea of ecclesiastical reform proposed at this time?

Chapter III

ECCLESIASTICAL CRITICISM AS CHURCH REFORM

A. Introductory Comments

Ecclesiastical criticism was a favorite method of church reform in the early sixteenth century. It expressed dissatisfaction with conditions as they then existed within the church and sought to recall the church to its original goals and purposes. The ideal of what the church ought to be formed the foundation for criticism of the church as it was. In the early sixteenth century it appears that most of the people writing on the subject of church reform believed that criticism of ecclesiastical conditions would bring about the desired improvements. There were few proposals involving a radical restructuring of the church. In most cases, reformers were content to point out those areas of ecclesiastical life that needed correction. This chapter summarizes the recurring themes of criticism which were raised during this period.

These themes of criticism were drawn from the popular authors of the period from 1510 to 1520. The popular authors were chosen on the basis of the number of contemporary editions of their works. This number was drawn from a listing of books by author, title, and place and date of publication compiled from basic bibliographies covering the period.[1] The subject matter of these books, as indicated by their titles, has been submitted to quantitative analysis to determine the extent of discussion on the topic of church reform. The language of the books is important in commenting on the audience to which the work was directed.

This kind of analysis is significant because of its concrete and specific nature. A discussion of religious sentiment is usually quite nebulous because it is so difficult to discover the religious convictions of the "common man" in any particular historical situation. Consideration of the kinds of books that were published, and their language, overcomes some of this vagueness. It is difficult, if not impossible, to know what the "common man" thought; it is quite possible to know what kind of books he wanted to read, and therein lies the significance of this analysis.

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[1] Four works were used for the compiling of this list: (1) Georg Wolfgang Panzer, Annalen der älteren deutschen Litteratur oder Anzeige und Beschreibung derjenigen Bücher welche von Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst bis MDXX. in deutscher Sprache gedruckt worden sind (Hildesheim, 1961), vol. I; (2) Emil Weller, Repertorium typographicum. Die deutsche Literatur im ersten Viertel des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts ("Annalen der älteren deutschen Literatur," vol. III; Hildesheim, 1961); (3) Arnold Kuczynski, Thesaurus libellorum historiam reformationis illustrantium (Leipzig, 1870-1874); (4) British Museum, Department of Printed Books, Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in the German-Speaking Countries and German Books Printed in Other Countries, (1455-1600), (London, 1962).

The books were divided into the following categories: (1) works dealing specifically with church reform, (2) liturgical or practical works, (3) works written or edited by humanists, (4) works on secular subjects, (5) polemical works, (6) theological works, (7) Biblical works. The categories overlap somewhat, but each title was assigned to the category that seemed to be most appropriate.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this listing by subject category was the paucity of books dealing specifically with church reform. Only slightly over two per cent of the almost thirteen hundred titles comprising this list dealt _per se_ with the subject of church reform.[1] Of these, sixty per cent were in German, the rest in Latin. Approximately half of the works dealing with church reform were satirical treatments of the ills of the church and contained no carefully conceived program for reform. These included Brant's _Ship of Fools_, _Letters of Obscure Men_, Hutten's _Fever_ dialogues, and his _German Requiem_. If we are to accept the judgment that all Germany was crying for reform, it seems strange that there was such a limited selection of books available on the subject. Church reform may have been discussed in books that have been listed in other categories. However, the German who went to his local book-seller and asked for a book on the specific topic of church reform would not have had a great deal of choice.

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[1] This figure comes from the author's tabulation from the sources given in the previous note. Unless otherwise indicated by an additional citation, the figures mentioned in the rest of this section were arrived at in the same manner.

It is also instructive to note the categories in which significant numbers of books were printed. The largest subject category in our listing was liturgical and practical works. Works included in this category were instructional books on the devotional life, missals, prayer books, lives of saints, and books on the care of souls. They constituted over one-third of the total and were published at a ratio of almost three-to-one, German over Latin.

Consideration of these figures leads to several observations. Those who printed books and those who purchased them appear far more interested in practical matters relating to the care of souls and the religious and devotional life than they were in ecclesiastical criticism and church reform. Further, this preponderance of books on the religious life provides evidence for those scholars who say that this period in German history was marked by religious vitality, not religious decadence.[1] The fact that almost seventy-five per cent of these books were printed in German indicates that they were intended for a larger reading public than those works published in Latin. It is significant that far more people desired books on the Christian life, in most cases a typically medieval expression of it, than desired books on church reform.

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1. See above p. 10, footnote 1.

The second largest category was works which the humanists wrote or which they edited and published from the sources of antiquity. This category comprised slightly over twenty-five per cent of the total. Almost ninety per cent of these were in Latin. The humanists had important things to say about church reform, but since they published so few of their works in German they communicated largely within their own circle. German translations of works by humanists included only two of Brant, eight of Hutten, and four of Erasmus. German translations of the sources of antiquity included one each from Aristotle, Plutarch, Isocrates, and Pliny, and two from Tacitus. Translations from the church fathers included two from Augustine and one each from Chrysostum and Anselm.[1] The humanists made no particular effort to publicize their ideas to the wider audience who could not read Latin.

The third largest category was books dealing with secular subjects, comprising just under one-fourth of the total. It is not surprising that about eighty per cent of these were published in German. It is striking that about ten times more books were printed on secular subjects than on church reform _per se_, although religious books outnumbered secular ones four and a half to one.

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[1] Even though our listing may not be complete, the significance of these figures remains. Out of the 1278 titles compiled, only 12 were German translations of works by humanists and only 23 were German translations from the sources of antiquity.

The number of books published in the other subject categories was quite small. Only about six per cent of the titles in our listing can be categorized as mainly polemical in nature. Theological works, including new editions of medieval theologians, made up about five per cent of the total published. Among those who purchased books, the lack of theological interest and the presence of substantial interest in the Christian life is obvious. The Bible was used a great deal by the publicists of the period, but its publication amounted to less than three per cent of the total. (See Table 1 for a listing of the statistics upon which these remarks are based.)

Table 1. German Books in Print, 1510-1520

Subject Category	Latin	German	Total
Reform	12	17	29
Liturgical and Practical	125	337	462
Humanists	294	35	329
Secular	52	230	282
Polemical	27	53	80
Theology	47	17	64
Biblical	20	12	32
Total	577	701	1278

Consideration also was given to the language in which books were published during the years 1510 to 1520. It is difficult to see any pattern emerging until the later years of the period. With the exception of 1518 and 1519, more books were published in German than in Latin every year.

Other than a sharp decline in the number of books printed in 1517, and a sharp increase in 1518, the most striking change comes in 1520. Though there is a small decrease in the number of books printed in 1520, the proportion of books printed in German changes dramatically. In 1519, German books constituted slightly less than half the total; in 1520, German books outnumbered Latin books over two to one.

When the figures for the publications from Luther are added, the change is even more noticeable. The total number of publications doubled from 1517 to 1518 and tripled from 1517 to 1520. Moreover, German titles outnumber Latin titles in 1519, and in 1520 German works constitute almost eighty per cent of the total. The number of German titles published nearly doubled from 1519 to 1520. These statistics can be interpreted as leading to two conclusions: (1) events of 1518 may have aroused the interest of both the printers of the time and their customers; (2) the rapidly increasing number of German publications from 1518 to 1520 reveals a movement to take the controversies of the time to the wider German-reading public. On the evidence of books that were printed, it can be seen that there was increasing involvement of the German people in the religious discussions and controversies of their day. (See Table 2, page 45 for a listing of the number of books published in Germany from 1510 to 1520 according to their language.)

Table 2. German Books in Print, 1510-1520

Year	Latin	German	Total
1510	37	64	101
1511	33	41	74
1512	44	74	118
1513	41	52	93
1514	49	69	118
1515	73	73	146
1516	57	65	122
1517	39	49	88
1518	85	60	145
1519	78	73	151
1520	39	81	120
1518*	107	73	180
1519*	96	104	200
1520*	59	206	265

*including Luther

This listing has also been used to help in answering the question: who were the people publicly raising their voices in ecclesiastical criticism or advocating church reform? It has revealed that most published criticism of ecclesiastical conditions came from two sources: German humanists and German churchmen.[1] Representatives were selected from each group, and then the recurring themes of criticism were drawn from their works.

The process of determining a representative group of German humanists began with the basic monograph by Lewis Spitz.[2] Sixteenth century humanism included both an interest in classical antiquity and a distinctive attitude toward antiquity. Spitz defined humanism as

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[1] Criticism was also voiced by political and social groups and figures. Their criticism and approach to church reform will be summarized in the 6th chapter.

[2] The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

> a spiritual movement rooted in a desire for the rebirth of classical antiquity. This had to be a rebirth in the strictest sense of the word, for it presupposed that antiquity was once dead but could be revitalized and made useful to men.[1]

Spitz made his selections of representative humanists on the basis of the individual's importance and significance.[2] Nine humanists were included in his discussion--Rudolf Agricola, Jakob Wimpfeling, John Reuchlin, Conrad Celtis, Ulrich von Hutten, Mutianus Rufus, Willibald Pirckheimer, Desiderius Erasmus, and Martin Luther. All but Agricola and Luther have entered to some degree into this consideration of ecclesiastical criticism.

Spitz chose Wimpfeling as the best example of a conservative reformer representing the priestly class, and his conservative outlook was typical of a large segment of German humanism.[3] Reuchlin has been included for the approach and

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1. The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 4-5.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

3. Ibid., pp. 17, 41. Cf. p. 17: "He is important for his role of leadership among the Alsatian reformers, as a moral purist, and as a strong patriot. His thought world was relatively simple and monolithic. His influence extended not only to his fellow humanists, but reached the young Luther himself." Selected works of Wimpfeling have been published in Amoenitates Literariae Friburgenses (3 vols.; Ulm, 1775-1776), hereafter cited as ALF. Some interesting letters of Wimpfeling have been published by Gustav Knod, "Neun Briefe von und an Jacob Wimpfeling," Vierteljahrsschrift für Kultur und Litteratur der Renaissance, I (1886), 229-243. The major biography is quite old: Joseph Knepper, Jakob Wimpfeling: Sein Leben und seine Werke (Freiburg, 1902).

methods he suggested and the controversy in which he was involved. Since his works did not deal specifically with church reform, they were not examined in detail. His work was esoteric and technical in nature and therefore had little interest for most people.[1] Conrad Celtis stood on the opposite end of the spectrum from Wimpfeling's conservatism and "illustrates the possibilities and the limitations in the contributions of poetic culture to the renaissance of Christendom."[2]

Ulrich von Hutten is briefly discussed in this chapter as a humanist. However, Hutten's more important contribution and more significant role in affairs came as a German knight writing in the German language; he will thus be discussed further in a later chapter.[3] Spitz rightly observes that Hutten "was basically a romantic imperialist, political propagandist, not a rationalistic, liberal humanist."[1] Sometime in 1518, Hutten became convinced of the eventual triumph of his position and therefore felt that the time was ripe for political action.[2] From that point on until his death, Hutten seemed more like a German knight ready for a fight, and less like a refined humanist and poet laureate.

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[1] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 80: "Reuchlin's design was to use Pythagoras and Cabala for Christ," hardly the kind of approach that would incite large numbers of people to reform the church. For a fuller presentation of this interpretation of Reuchlin see Lewis W. Spitz, "Reuchlin's Philosophy: Pythagoras and Cabala for Christ," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, XLVII (1956), 1-20.

[2] Ibid., p. 81. Celtis' more radical or liberal spirit can be easily discovered in the Selections from Conrad Celtis, 1459-1508, edited and translated by Leonard Forster (Cambridge, 1948). Other published sources of Celtis are Fünf Bücher Epigramme, edited by Karl Hartfelder (Berlin, 1881), and Hans Rupprich (ed.), Der Briefwechsel des Konrad Celtis ("Veröffentlichungen der Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Reformation und Gegenreformation. Humanistenbriefe," vol. III; München, 1934). The latest biography is by Lewis Spitz, Conrad Celtis, The German Arch-Humanist (Cambridge, Mass., 1957).

[3] Hutten's most widely known writings were the German pamphlets, bitterly critical of Rome, which have been published as Gesprächbuchlein, edited by Richard Zoozmann

Mutianus Rufus was a significant figure among the humanists, more for the position he held than for the opinions and ideas which he published. He held undisputed leadership of the humanist circle at the university at Erfurt which became one of the most influential intellectual forces in Germany.[3] Because his views were not published and therefore

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(Dresden, 1905). The standard edition of Hutten's works is Eduardus Böcking (ed.), Ulrich Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera (7 vols.; Leipzig, 1859-1864). Hereafter cited as Opera. For an adequate biography, see Hajo Holborn, Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation, translated by Roland H. Bainton ("Yale Historical Publications Studies," vol. XI; New Haven, 1937). See also Paul Held, Ulrich von Hutten. Seine religiös-geistige Auseinandersetzung mit Katholizismus, Humanismus, Reformation ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. XLVI, 1; Leipzig, 1928).

[1] Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 128. He continues: "For Hutten the belles-lettres even of the classical authors were not an end in themselves. Rather they were an instrument for the cultural and political rejuvenation of the Empire."

[2] Holborn, Ulrich von Hutten, p. 103.

[3] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 130-131. With the exception of Spitz's chapter, there is no significant secondary literature on Mutian. Mutian's correspondence has been published by Carl Krause (ed.), Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus ("Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde," n.f. XI, supp.; Kassel, 1885).

not widely known, Mutian has not played a significant role in this chapter.

Desiderius Erasmus appears to have been the mentor or hero for many of the German humanists. Since the sixteenth century, he has come to be known as "the prince of the humanists"; and because of his prominence this discussion relies substantially on his works. Erasmus held the position of leadership in the minds of most of the German humanists, and because of his widespread influence his opinions loom large in this study and its conclusions. His inclusion in a discussion of German humanism might be questioned were it not for the pervasive influence he exercised. On at least one occasion, Erasmus referred to "our own Germany," though it is clear that he lacked a strong national consciousness.[1]

Some attention has been given to Willibald Pirckheimer, although most of his activity centered in municipal affairs in Nürnberg and thus lies outside the subject of this investigation.[1] His main humanistic endeavor was the translation of the sources of antiquity and therefore offers little help in assessing Pirckheimer's own attitude toward church reform.[2]

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[1] The Epistles of Erasmus, translated by Francis Morgan Nichols (3 vols.; New York, 1901-1918), I, 66-67. It could be argued that Erasmus' use of "our own Germany" was nothing more than a ploy to ingratiate himself with Germans since he also referred to "our Britain," (ibid., III, 379). According to Johan Huizinga, the German humanists enthusiastically received Erasmus and "applauded him emphatically as being a German himself and an ornament of Germany": Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation, translated by F. Hopman (New York, 1957), p. 89. Paul Joachimsen interprets Erasmus as fusing and summarizing the tendencies of German humanism; see his article "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," p. 459. Spitz explains why Erasmus should be included in a consideration of German humanism and is probably very close to the spirit of Erasmus when he notes that on the whole Erasmus "belonged to all nations, including the Germans, rather than none" (Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 197-198).

From Spitz's listing of important German humanists, only two have been completely excluded from consideration. Agricola did not live into the period under investigation. His influence came in terms of the example he set and the life he breathed into the humanistic movement.[3] Luther's inclusion in a discussion of German humanism might itself be questioned; but, because of a methodological limitation, he has been excluded from this study.

Four additional humanists have been included in this survey. Sebastian Brant offered biting criticism in his

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[1] Pirckheimer gained some prominence as a member of the city council of Nürnberg. While serving in this capacity his position toward the Reformation was equivocal. See the chapter on Pirckheimer in Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 155-196.

[2] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 164-169. There is no adequate modern biography of Pirckheimer. The best treatment is by Hans Rupprich, "Willibald Pirckheimer, Beiträge zu einer Wesenserfassung," Schweizer Beiträge zur Allgemeinen Geschichte, XV (1957), 64-110. Since there is no edition of his works, the only primary material available is Emil Reicke (ed.), Der Briefwechsel des Willibald Pirckheimer (2 vols.; "Veröffentlichungen der Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Reformation und Gegenreformation"; München, 1940, 1956).

[3] According to Spitz, his "power lay in his personality, not in his pen; for he wrote little and aside from a poem or two he published nothing during his lifetime" (Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 20).

Ship of Fools which, though it was written before the period under examination, was a popular book throughout the period and was repeatedly published.[1] Crotus Rubeanus has been added in terms of the part he played in the writing of the Letters of Obscure Men. The correspondence of Justus Jonas and Beatus Rhenanus has also been examined.[2] Even though the correspondence of these humanists was not always public knowledge, it was used to arrive at a more complete understanding. In addition to the ones suggested by Spitz, these four humanists constitute the representative group of German humanists investigated in this study.[1] Not all German humanists have been included, but the list is representative of the major trends and most important figures in the group.

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[1] The translation of the Ship of Fools used in this study was by Edwin H. Zeydel ("Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies," vol. XXXVI; New York, 1944). For bibliography and a survey of the numerous editions of the Ship of Fools, see the introduction by Zeydel, pp. 21-32, 45-54. Zeydel suggests that the best critical edition by far is still Das Narrenschiff, edited by F. Zarnacke (Leipzig, 1854). Hereafter cited as (Narrenschiff). This is the text used in this study. For what is basically a literary examination of Brant and an updated bibliography, see Ulrich Gaier, Studien zu Sebastian Brants Narrenschiff (Tübingen, 1966). Though he at times overstates the relationship between Brant and the Reformation, R. Warwick Bond has correctly noted Brant's conservative nature: "At bottom strongly conservative, he sees practical abuses and protests against them, not with any view of weakening or changing the basis of ecclesiastical authority, but rather of reanimating it to a pristine vigour. But he is entirely liberal in requiring that the moral and religious conduct of life shall be not merely traditional, but intelligent, by which much evil and unhappiness may be averted." See his Studia Otiosa: Some Aspects in Criticism (London, 1938), p. 22. Brant's conservatism has been re-emphasized by William Gilbert, "Sebastian Brant: Conservative Humanist," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, XLVI (1955), 145-167, though he corrects Bond's view of Brant's relation to the Reformation. See Gilbert, p. 146: "The study of these books leads to the conclusion that Brant was essentially medieval, and that, although he stood at the threshold of a new age, he cannot be said to have done anything to usher it in." For a comparison of satire as used by Brant and Erasmus, see Hermann Schönfeld, "Die kirchliche Satire und religiöse Weltanschauung in Brants, 'Narrenschiff' und Erasmus 'Narrenlob,' resp. in den 'Colloquia,' " Modern Language Notes, VII (1892), 78-92, 137-149.

[2] Gustav Kawerau (ed.), Der Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas ("Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen und angrenzender Gebiete," vol. XVII; Halle, 1884), and Adalbert Horawitz and Karl Hartfelder (eds.), Der Briefwechsel des Beatus Rheanus

An examination of the books published in Germany from 1510 to 1520 and the history of the period reveal eight important critics of ecclesiastical conditions from the ranks of the clergy or men closely tied to the church. Their importance was reflected in the frequency with which their writings were published. These eight form the nucleus for a survey of ecclesiastical criticism from the perspective of churchmen. Six of these remained loyal Catholics--Thomas Murner, Giles of Viterbo, John Geiler, Berthold Pürstinger, Cardinal Cajetan, and John von Staupitz. Two became famous reformers--Philip Melanchthon and Andreas Carlstadt. The one thing they

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(Leipzig, 1886). Jonas' significance has been attested to in the biography by Martin Lehmann, Justus Jonas: Loyal Reformer (Minneapolis, 1963). See also Walter Delius, Justus Jonas (Berlin, 1952).

[1] Suggestions for humanists to be considered have been taken from the following works: Heinrich Hermelink, Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus (Tübingen, 1907). Paul Joachimsen, "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes." Bernd Moeller, "Die deutschen Humanisten und die Anfänge der Reformation," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, LXX (1959), 46-61. Gerhard Ritter, "Die geschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Humanismus," Historische Zeitschrift, CXXVII (1923), 393-453.

all had in common was dissatisfaction with the church as it was.

The representative German humanists used in this study were thoroughly dissatisfied with ecclesiastical conditions, and their works were full of criticism.[1] The expression of this criticism ranged from the subtle wit of Erasmus in Praise of Folly to the moral superiority of Brant in Ship of Fools to the scathing denunciations in the Letters of Obscure Men.

The distressing plight of the church was often decried by humanists. In a letter to Paul Volz, Erasmus posed the rhetorical question, "Who, truly pious, does not see and lament over this age, the most corrupt so far?"[2] The state of the church convinced Brant that the time of the Antichrist was near.[3] He feared that the church was about to be shipwrecked:

> St. Peter's ship is swaying madly,
> It may be wrecked or damaged badly,
> The waves are striking 'gainst the side
> And storm and trouble may betide.

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[1] Much of the remainder of this chapter will attempt to detail their dissatisfaction. The accuracy of their judgment cannot be determined here. The crucial point for this study is not the actual condition of the church, but what the humanists and others thought it was.

[2] Christian Humanism and the Reformation, edited and translated by John C. Olin (New York, 1965), p. 115. Hereafter cited as Christian Humanism. For the Latin text, see Erasmi Epistolae, edited by P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod (12 vols.; Oxford, 1906-1958), III, 366. Hereafter cited as Allen.

[3] Ship of Fools, pp. 331-336. Narrenschiff, pp. 98-100.

But little truth is now asserted
And Holy Writ is quite perverted,
It's now defined some other way
From what the tongue of truth would say.[1]

Hutten believed that the previous three hundred years of church history had resulted in the gradual undermining of the Christian religion.[2] Since these corrupt conditions resulted in many people "leaving or rebelling against the Roman Church,"[3] Jakob Wimpfeling felt that the conditions had already been tolerated too long.[4]

Churchmen joined humanists in bemoaning the state of ecclesiastical affairs and prophesying dire consequences for the future of the church. John Geiler thought conditions were worsening and discounted the possibility of a general reform. God was about to use the Turks as a means of exercising his judgment upon the church.[5] Cardinal Cajetan called upon the members of his order to arouse themselves to work for reform.[1] Bishop Pürstinger feared that the church faced suffering and would be restored only after its ruination by the Turks or other faithless people.[2] In his "oratio" to the Lateran Council, Giles of Viterbo described how the forces of immorality were threatening to drive the holy ship aground.[3] In his 1518 lecture on education, Melanchthon discussed the "fall" of the church with particular reference to the study of

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[1] Ship of Fools, pp. 333-334. Narrenschiff, p. 99.

[2] Opera, I, 182.

[3] Wimpfeling, ALF, p. 522. Cf. Brant, Ship of Fools, p. 316. Narrenschiff, p. 93.

[4] "Multa enim hactenus per patientiam tolerata sunt, quae si deducta fuissent in iudicium & concilium exigente, Christiana iustitia, non debebant neque amodo debent tolerari," in ALF, p. 331.

[5] On Geiler see E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Keisersberg ("Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought," vol. I; Leiden, 1966), pp. 62, 93-95. Geiler's sermons were collected and published in his lifetime. Publication continued after his death with two or three editions a year from 1511 to 1522. See Miriam Usher Chrisman, Strasbourg and the Reform; A Study in the Process of Change ("Yale Historical Publications," miscellany 87; New Haven, 1967), p. 78.

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1. "Hora igitur cum sit a somno surgerdi, obsecro vos omnes per viscera misericordiae domini nostri Iesu Christi, ut ad reformationem ordinis parati sic sitis . . ." Published in the collection of documents from the generals of the Dominican order in the series on the history of that order. See Acta Capitulorum Generalium ordinis praedicatorum, edited by Benedictus M. Reichert ("Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica," vol. IX; Rome, 1901), pp. 93-94.

2. On Pürstinger, see the very helpful work by Heinrich Werner, Die Flugschrift "Onus ecclesiae" mit einem Anhang über sozial- und kirchenpolitische Prophetien (Giessen, 1901), pp. 18, 39. Hereafter cited as Onus ecclesiae. Pürstinger's work was unavailable for this study, but Werner provides abundant citations from the text in his notes.

3. "Oratio prima synodi Lateranensis," in Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, edited by Joannes D. Mansi (53 vols.; Paris, 1903-1927), XXXII, 670. Cf. ibid.: "Vidimus perditam malorum audaciam adversus jura, auctoritatem, majestatem ecclesiae saevientem." John W. O'Mally, "Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the Early Sixteenth Century," Theological Studies, XXVIII (1967), 548, notes the significance of Giles' view of history: "The Church was indescribably corrupt, and the need for reform was feverishly urgent because the structure Giles imposed upon history told him it had to be so."

literature.[1]

The basic criticism of ecclesiastical conditions by both humanists and churchmen was that the church had failed to live up to the noble ideals it propounded. The critics were disturbed by what seemed to them to be a striking disparity between things as they ought to be and things as they were. Ecclesiastical criticism as church reform sought to make clearer the disjuncture between the real and the ideal. In this way, the critics hoped the situation might be improved.

In the material that follows, the conviction that the church had failed to live up to its ideals will be illustrated by the collection of source materials around five recurring themes of ecclesiastical criticism as found in the published works of the leading humanists and churchmen of that day. These themes summarize the major complaints about the church and, in a negative way, reveal something of a program for church reform.

B. The Presence of Immorality

The first of these themes was the deterioration of morals which was having a debilitating effect on the life of the church. The immoral behavior of both clergymen and laymen was far from the ethical ideals of Christianity. Sebastian Brant noted that even though the Bible and the Fathers were readily available as guides for Christian living, a universal sinfulness remained:

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[1] Philip Melanchthon, Werke in Auswahl, edited by Robert Stupperich, et. al. (6 vols.; Gütersloh, 1951ff), III, 33: "Hic casus vere Christianos ecclesiae ritus ac mores, illa studia litterarum labefactavit." Hereafter cited as Werke. Extensive bibliography on Melanchthon is cited and annotated by Peter Fraenkel, "Fünfzehn Jahre Melanchthonforschung," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, XXII (1960), 582-624.

> The whole world lives in darksome night,
> In blinded sinfulness persisting,
> While every street sees fools existing
> Who know but folly to their shame,
> Yet will not own to folly's name.[1]

Erasmus was disturbed that ecclesiastical leaders lived so wickedly that they led the church into scandal and limited its effectiveness. Corruption in religious orders was so extensive that most of them did little else than "drag boys to perdition."[2] The church had no more serious enemy than those pontiffs who would limit Christ "by mercenary rules, adulterate His teaching by forced interpretations and crucify him afresh by their scandalous life."[3] Bishop Pürstinger was frightened by what he considered to be a loosening of morality.[4]

This immorality was most often illustrated by the twin evils of sensualism and materialism. Brant's "ship" was full of people who made fools of themselves by their sexual immorality. The fool who frequented "lewd women" jeopardized the future of his soul.[1] Since adultery was so prevalent and no longer punished or even condemned by society, Brant suggested that a husband with a beautiful wife should not invite many guests to his home.[2]

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[1] Ship of Fools, p. 57. Narrenschiff, p. 2.

[2] Allen, II, 309: "Si palam mali sunt, ut sunt plerique, quid aliud quam pueros in perniciem pertrahunt?"

[3] Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, translated by Hoyt Hopewell Hudson (Princeton, N.J., 1941), p. 100.

[4] Onus ecclesiae, p. 37.

However, prostitution and adultery were not the only manifestations of sensuality that Brant noted. He found further evidence for his criticism in the suggestive clothing that was worn in his day:

> Shameless and fickle I do brand
> Style slaves who live in every land;
> Their coats are short and shorter grow,
> So that their navels almost show.
> 'Twill lead to evil, lead to woe,
> And then grow worse and harm your name;
> Woe's every man who rouges shame,
> Woe's him who condones such sin,
> His wages will be paid to him.[3]

According to Brant, dancing was a sensual invention of the devil that led his victims to other evils. Even at religious festivals and services, both priests and laity danced freely:

> They swing their partners in the breeze
> Till girls' bare legs high up one sees,
> Their other sins I will not treat.

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1. Brant, Ship of Fools, p. 179. Narrenschiff, p. 53.

2. Ship of Fools, pp. 136-139. Narrenschiff, pp. 34-36.

3. Ship of Fools, p. 69. Narrenschiff, pp. 7-8. Cf. "Some clothes they wear would put to shame/Full many a man's unblemished name,/Shoes pointed, bodice cut too low,/So that their breasts might almost show," Ship of Fools, p. 61. Narrenschiff, p. 4.

They'd rather swing their girls than eat.[1]

For Erasmus, one of the worst manifestations of immorality was the way in which many people came to expect easy forgiveness for their sins. A token amount of money paid to a priest assured one of forgiveness:

> I fancy that I see some merchant or soldier or judge laying down one small coin from his extensive booty and expecting that the whole cesspool of his life will be at once purified. He conceives that just so many perjuries, so many lustful acts, so many debauches, so many fights, murders, frauds, lies, and so many breaches of faith, are bought off as by contract; and so bought off that with a clean slate he may start from scratch upon a new round of sins.[2]

Brant described all parts of German society as foolishly sensual. The bitterly satirical Letters of Obscure Men centered on the sensuality of the clergy and theologians.[3] The clergy and theologians who opposed Reuchlin were severely criticized for their blatant sexual immorality. One such opponent was made to complain about the hardships of a visit to Rome and expressed his desire to return to Germany:

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[1] Ship of Fools, p. 205. Narrenschiff, pp. 60-61.

[2] Praise of Folly, pp. 56-57.

[3] The standard edition of the Epistolae obscurorum virorum is edited and translated by Francis Griffin Stokes (New Haven, 1925), containing both the Latin text and the English translation. Henceforth cited by EOV with page numbers for both the Latin and the English. For a discussion of authorship, see Stokes' introduction to EOV, pp. lvi-lxviii. This satire cannot be used to discover "facts" about immorality among the clergy in early sixteenth century Germany. The work is not a reliable picture of conditions as they actually were. However, it does accurately portray the attitude of humanists toward the leaders of the church. The Letters of Obscure Men will be used in this study as a reflection of the critical spirit of humanists and, by implication, the ideals and goals which they held for the church.

> Wherefore the women of Rome please me not. They have a saying that it is not physical to go a-wenching here in the dog-days. So, say I, let me get home to Germany again, where one can wench the year round.[1]

Adding to the authors' disgust was the cavalier attitude on the part of the offending clergy: "we must sometimes be merry and have to do with a wench, when nobody is the wiser; after, we can make a confession; and the Lord is merciful, wherefore we hope for forgiveness."[2] According to the Letters, these clergy considered sexual activity a natural part of their human condition. They also excused themselves by some strained interpretations of Scripture:

> And wherefore may I not sometimes purge my reins? I am no angel, but a man--and to err is human. Even you go a-wenching now and then, albeit you are a Theologer, for you cannot always lie alone; as saith Ecclesiastes III (4): "If two lie together, then they have heat, but how can one be warm?"[3]

This clerical immorality hindered the work of the church. Jakob Wimpfeling wrote to Christopher de Utenheim that fornication, adultery, and concubinage among the priests led people away from the church.[4] Pürstinger decried the granting of episcopal income to adulterers, sportsmen, fornicators, and other worthless persons since he believed it should be given to worthy and pious causes.[1] Few German priests had not had their pastoral abilities weakened by the enervating influences of concubines. The house of God had been turned into a den of robbers and a brothel.[2]

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[1] EOV, pp. 215, 472. Cf. pp. 38, 314.

[2] Ibid., pp. 28, 307: "Sed sit a vel b, nos debemus esse aliquando laeti, et etiam possumus dormire cum mulieribus, quando nemo videt; postea tamen facimus confessionem; et deus est misericors, et debemus sperare veniam."

[3] Ibid., pp. 26, 306.

[4] Knod, "Neun Briefe," p. 234.

In addition to their indictment of sensualism, the critics also denounced the materialism of many Germans. This materialism was seen in the pervasive greed of the people and in the bribery that appeared to be an accepted part of ecclesiastical and political life. Brant noted that many laymen were so materialistic that their only reason for coming to Mass was to discuss business affairs.[3] Pürstinger wanted to replace the all too prevalent vices of "superbia, avaritia, luxuria," with "obedientia, paupertas, continentia."[4] The materialism of the alchemist, the quack, and the person who made profit from holy things came under attack by Thomas Murner.[1] Geiler preached against those who made money their God or pursued riches and worldly goods as their ultimate goal.[2]

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[1] Onus ecclesiae, p. 24: "episcopi reditus ecclesiarum non in pias causas sed consanguineis, histrionibus, adulatoribus, venatoribus, scortis ac similibus personi frivole expendunt."

[2] Ibid., p. 27: "In Alemania me hercle pauci sunt curati qui non foetore concubinatus marcescunt sic cum simoniaca negotiatione et delicta ingluvie ex domo dei faciunt speluncam latronum et stabulum porcorum."

[3] "And many come to church for greed,/For they do business there in church,/Else they would leave it in the lurch," Ship of Fools, p. 296. Narrenschiff, p. 87. Greed also blinds us so that we "wish for things we never need," Ship of Fools, p. 123. Narrenschiff, p. 29.

[4] Onus ecclesiae, p. 27. See Thomas Murner's condemnation of avarice in Narrenbeschwörung ("Neudrucke deutscher Literatur Werke des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," no. 119-124; Halle, 1894), pp. 29-32. Hereafter cited as NB.

Materialism was also thought to be prevalent among the clergy. One of Wimpfeling's favorite themes was to lament the public lack of confidence in the priesthood "because of a few greedy and insatiable ones."[3] He also leveled criticism at the impious clergy who robbed the church and stole bread from the mouths of the poor.[4] Celtis was so distressed by the materialism of ecclesiastical leaders that he could say that those "who are elected bishops and princes of our most beautiful religion are inflamed with nothing but avarice and burn with such insatiable thirst that they bury money with them in the ground like the corpses of the dead."[5] Pürstinger believed that the "root and origin of all evil" was the worldly possessions of the clergy.[1] He described how covetousness was spreading like an epidemic among the bishops of the church who were more interested in "officia fisci" than in "opera Christi."[2]

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[1] NB, pp. 25, 101-103, 117-121.

[2] John Geiler, Ausgewählte Schriften, edited by Philipp de Lorenzi (4 vols.; Trier, 1881-1883), II, 13-14. Hereafter cited as AS.

[3] ALF, p. 529: "non essent tanta murmura & odia vulgi in cunctos fere sacerdotes, propter paucos avarissimos ac insatiabiles."

[4] Ibid., p. 501: "contra hanc impietatem eorum, qui ecclesias expilant, privilegia rumpunt, divinum cultum obtruncant, ius patronatus praelatis & laicis auferunt, qui satiari non possunt, qui pauperibus panem ab ore praeripiunt . . . contra tam execrandam avaritiam & contra detestabilem prorsus simoniam . . . ."

[5] Selections, p. 60.

Erasmus carried this criticism of clerical materialism to the highest prince of the church. He went so far as to suggest that the Pope was so greedy that he treated people "not as men, but as cattle to be bought and sold."[3] Brant caricatured the money-hungry monks and relic sellers:

> And Prior shouts: "Bring more, bring plus!"
> His is a sack that's bottomless!
> Quite similar are the relic-vendors,
> The pious dealers and pretenders.[4]

The Letters of Obscure Men condemned another aspect of ecclesiastical materialism--the flagrant practice of bribery, particularly as it was used to win the case against Reuchlin. In one of the letters Hoogstraten's attempt to win papal favor is narrated, and its temporary success noted:

> Lately he gave a banquet, and invited many courtiers of years and experience, and an Apostolical Secretary who is in high favour with his Holiness, and sundry judges of the Rota. He plied them with partridges, and pheasants, and hares, and fresh fish, and the best Corsican and Greek wines. They all declared that he had dealt with them most honourably, and said among themselves,

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[1] Onus ecclesiae, p. 17: "radix et inceptrix omnium malorum."

[2] Ibid., p. 24.

[3] Epistles of Erasmus, III, 312. Allen, III, 251: "Prorsus sublatus est e rebus humanis pudor. Ad summum ventum esse video tyrannidis. Pontifex ac Reges populum non pro hominibus sed pro pecudibus empticiis habent."

[4] Ship of Fools, p. 209. Narrenschiff, pp. 61-62.

> "By the Lord, we have here a Theologian of consequence: we will be on his side."[1]

In summary, it was believed that both laymen and clergy had hindered the cause of Christ by engaging in immoral practices. The moral situation merited reform because conditions, as the critics saw them, were a far cry from the ideal of the founder of the church. Reform, in this case, meant the elimination of sensualism and materialism. Relying on individual changes of heart, it involved no restructuring of the church.

C. Clerical Competency

Dissatisfaction with the way the clergy fulfilled their duties and responsibilities was the second recurring theme of ecclesiastical criticism. The clergy failed to live up to the ideals which they professed. One should be able to look to these servants of the church to see Christian ideals put into practice. However, to the critics, no one seemed to personify less the ideals of the Christian religion than its priests.

The best known expression of this disparity between clerical conditions and the Christian ideal is the satirical Julius Excluded, usually attributed to Erasmus, in which Pope Julius II finds himself excluded from heaven by St. Peter.[1] Brant condemned the hypocrisy of the priests because they openly committed the same sins against which they preached.[2] Thomas Murner criticized those priests who exploited their flock instead of caring for it.[3]

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[1] EOV, pp. 141-142, 403. Also pp. 52, 326; 277, 531. The opponents would go to any length to win their case against Reuchlin, including bribing the translator of his book (Augenspiegel) to falsify it so as to make Reuchlin's views clearly heretical (See pp. 236, 492).

Lewis Spitz suggested that sixteenth century interest in the reform of the clergy provides certain proof that church reform by conciliarism had ended in failure. Many of the clerical abuses lamented during our period were identical to those denounced in the great fifteenth century councils.[4] For example, Wimpfeling criticized these clerical wrongs, which have striking similarity to those most often listed in the records of the councils: "verbosity in the pulpit; liturgical malpractice; ignorance of the Scriptures, the fathers, and the doctors; avarice, arrogance, and bad manners;

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[1] On the nature of the work see Myron P. Gilmore, The World of Humanism, p. 163: "Every resource of the author's irony is directed to making manifest the incompatibility between the aims and achievements of this greatest of Renaissance popes and the ideals of the founder of Christianity."

[2] "The priests can say whate'er they may,/Let them forbid this, that for aye!/If this were sinful, as they claim,/Then why, why do they do the same?" Ship of Fools, p. 241. Narrenschiff, p. 71.

[3] See NB, "Die schaff schinden," pp. 110-113. Cf. Murner's comments on how the priests overburden the people: "Den esel überladen," in NB, pp. 168-170.

[4] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 52.

promotion because of noble birth; exemptions for bishops and archbishops."[1] The successes in raising the level of competency of the clergy during the conciliar movement were of a temporary nature. By the time of the early sixteenth century, it appears that the same ills were again plaguing the church.

In a letter written in 1518, Hutten criticized the "apostles" of Germany. Their capriciousness led them to prefer evil over good. They had no religious zeal, nor did they preach "pious recollection of the gospel." They avenged their personal wrongs by using their influential positions within the church. They led innocent members of the church into harmful activities. And they did it all in a haughty, cruel, immoderate, and arrogant manner.[2]

Erasmus criticized all levels of the clergy for failing to fulfill their responsibilities. As shepherds, the bishops did very well feeding themselves, but they left the care of the sheep to their assistants, or did nothing about it at all. In collecting money "they truly play the bishop,

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1. Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 52.

2. Hutten, Opera, I, 166: "Tales nunc habet Germania apostolos, tales evangelii praecones, ferendos illos quidem, vitia hominum quatenus benigne arguebant; nunc cum omnia sibi licere putent, et ex libidine cuicui volunt maledicant, nullo religionis zelo, nulla pietatis recordatione evangelium praedicent, pro divino verbo convitia seminent, in publico sacro privatam iniuriam uleiscantur, imo inuriam ipsi inferant ac innocentibus discrimen obiiciant, cum haec omnia superbe, crudeliter, immodice ac insolenter faciant, quid obstabit, quo minus aliquando baculis ac lapidibus talis modi hypocritis obturbemus?"

overseeing everything--and overlooking nothing."[1] Staupitz complained that the bishops sinned freely and no one dared rebuke them.[2] Pürstinger felt that the office of the bishop was too similar to the office of the worldly prince.[3]

The theologians of the church were criticized for spending too much time discussing earthly matters instead of studying and teaching true Christian theology, their divinely appointed task.[4] Even the popes were criticized, for they had turned their work over to Peter and Paul who had time for it, "but the splendor and the pleasure they take care of personally."[5] The more radical critics argued that the pope had fallen so far short of the ideal of Christ that he had become the forerunner of anti-Christ and lived more like the Emperor Constantine than the Apostle Peter.[6]

But for Celtis the problem was greater than the clergy not doing their jobs. Some of the priests actively suppressed the development of true religion, going so far as to try to keep religious books from falling into the hands of the people.[1]

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[1] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 97.

[2] Georg Buchwald and E. Wolf (eds.), Staupitz Tübinger Predigten ("Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte," vol. VIII; Leipzig, 1927), p. 157: "Episcopi namque multi, item archidyanconi canonici tanta libertate peccant, ut nemo audeat increpare eos, nemo culpam corrigere, nemo vicia inculpare." Hereafter cited as TP.

[3] Onus ecclesiae, p. 23.

[4] Christian Humanism, pp. 97-98. For the Latin text see Desiderius Erasmus, Ausgewählte Werke, edited by Hajo Holborn (München, 1933), pp. 142-143. Hereafter cited as AW.

[5] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 90.

[6] Pürstinger, Onus ecclesiae, p. 22. Cf. Melanchthon, Werke, I, 66.

Perhaps the most blatant example of this clerical failure was the accumulation of benefices. Sebastian Brant noted the foolishness of priests who added benefices to their care when they did so poorly with the ones they had:

> Fool he with benefice so great
> That he can scarcely bear the weight
> Yet always takes another pack
> And almost breaks the ass's back.
> Some many a benefice have won,
> Who cannot tend a little one,
> Although but one would quite suffice.[2]

Wimpfeling was another who disapproved of the accumulation of benefices and believed that if the practice were eliminated, religion would prosper and God would be honored.[3]

The disparity between the Christian ideal and priestly behavior was evident in yet another way. The clergy of the church were under the harmful influence of a worldliness that compromised Christian ideals. Erasmus recognized that any spiritual man would find much to ridicule in the worldliness of Christian people: "he will see a great many opinions so radically corrupted as to have no resemblance to the teaching of Christ, from which a good part of them were derived, for even into Christianity we have introduced a certain worldliness."[1] It was obvious to Erasmus that the attitudes of many of the clergy were far from the pattern set by Christ. The worldliness and pride of the clergy contradicted the sacrificial and humble spirit of Christ on the cross.

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[1] Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p. 112.

[2] Ship of Fools, pp. 130-131. Narrenschiff, p. 32.

[3] ALF, p. 523: "In utraque enim civitate, nullus simul in diversis ecclesiis plures canonicatus aut vicarias, ex sanctissima consuetudine possidere potest. Ideo utrobique religio & divinus cultus egregie floret, & summi pontificis (Aenea Silvio teste) interest curare, ut honoretur Deus, & illi laudes atque hymni canantur."

Mistress Folly ridiculed the clergy for acting more like princes of this world than obedient servants of the church. In their minds,

> to instruct the people is irksome; to interpret the Holy Scripture is pedantry; to pray is otiose; to shed tears is distressing and womanish; to live in poverty is sordid; to be beaten in war is dishonorable and less than worthy of one who will hardly admit kings, however great, to kiss his sacred foot; and finally, to die is unpleasant, to die on the cross a disgrace.[2]

In a letter to Justas Jonas, Erasmus questioned whether princes of the church had ever so ardently desired the privileges of worldly princes as they did in his own day.[3] Wimpfeling saw evidence of this desire to be like worldly princes in the extravagant ceremonies for the confirmation of bishops and archbishops--ceremonies paid for by further exploitation of the people.[4]

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1. The Enchiridion, translated and edited by Raymond Himelick (Bloomington, Ind., 1963), p. 156.

2. Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 99.

3. The letter is translated in Christian Humanism, pp. 151-163. Cf. Allen, IV, 486-493.

4. ALF, pp. 520-521: "ammodo tantas expensas & molestias pati, tantas pro confirmatione archieposcoporum & episcoporum inferre annatas."

Pürstinger knew of worldly bishops who, instead of acting as peace-makers among secular princes, resembled military commanders, inciting wars and fighting among themselves.[1] These spiritual princes thought nothing of enriching their family by ecclesiastical plundering.[2] To Melanchthon, the pope was so accomplished a worldly prince that he held the German nation under a yoke of tyranny by his political astuteness.[3]

In short, this dissatisfaction with the clergy was one important reason why the critics thought that the life of the church had lost its meaning. They did not reject the concept of the priesthood; their discontent was with those priests who did not properly care for the souls in their charge. Their criticism demanded no new approach to the priesthood; it recalled the priests to the ideals taught by Christ.

D. Perversion of Ecclesiastical Practices

The third recurring theme of ecclesiastical criticism dealt with the perversion of certain practices in the life of the church. The church could fulfill its mission only when these abuses were removed. Christianity had become a religion of external observances and not an internal religion which resulted in changed lives. Erasmus was the foremost critic of this externalizing of religion.

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[1] Onus ecclesiae, p. 23.

[2] Ibid., p. 25: "cum ecclesiarum suarum expilatione."

[3] Melanchthon, Werke, I, 66: "Mihi certe hoc astu a Romanis pontificibus haec primum natio sub iugum missa videtur." Cf. I, 64, 128.

In a letter written by Erasmus in 1514, but not published during our period, he explained his opposition to certain religious practices, even though they perhaps arose out of pious motivation:

> We rest our religion upon place, dress, food, or some trifling ceremonies. We think it is all over with one who changes a white coat for a black, wears a hat instead of a cowl, or occasionally shifts his locality. I venture to say, that the greatest bane of Christian piety has arisen out of these so called religions, although it was perhaps a pious zeal that first introduced them.[1]

Mistress Folly pointed out the foolishness of those Christians who think they will attain heaven if they simply recite seven verses from the Psalms each day.[2] Their folly may be compared to those priests who think they have fulfilled their obligation by muttering prayers which are neither heard by God nor understood by the priests themselves.[3]

Erasmus had mixed feelings on the subject of ceremonies. He was not unalterably opposed to ceremonies, especially those which had been "sanctioned by the authority of the church."[1] However, he did not approve of "having the whole life of the Christian overburdened with ceremonies introduced by human statutes." He felt that too much was attributed to outward observance of ceremonies and too little to inward devotion; simple people could be so occupied with externals that they might neglect the pursuit of true religion.[2] Erasmus approved of ceremonies which were properly instituted and administered, but he recognized that their misuse could deter the faithful. Ceremonies need not be completely excluded from religion, but religion involved far more than external observance.

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, I, 143-144. Allen, I, 567: "In loco, in cultu, in victu, in caeremoniolis quibusdam Christum et pietatem collocamus. Actum putamus de illo qui vestem albam commutarit in nigram, aut qui cucullum pileo verterit, qui locum subinde mutet. Ausim illud dicere, magnam Christianae pietatis perniciem ex istis quas vocant religionibus exortam esse, tametsi pio fortassis studio primum inductae sunt."

[2] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 57.

[3] Ibid., p. 102.

Further insight into the understanding Erasmus held of ecclesiastical practices can be gained by examining his attitude toward two common activities of the life of piety in his day: saint veneration and pilgrimages. He questioned the value of saint veneration and pilgrimages, not because they were harmful in themselves, but because they diverted the Christian's attention from more valuable expressions of piety.

Erasmus felt that in his day the veneration of saints was full of abuses. The common man honored the saints more than he honored Christ himself. It was widely believed that the Virgin Mary was more accessible and more willing to help than her son. Mistress Folly ridiculed the calling upon the power of particular saints for special problems--one for toothache, one for shipwreck, one for the recovery of stolen goods.[1] In the Enchiridion, Erasmus suggested that unless the abuses were removed and worship was restored to Christ these practices were not Christian.[2]

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[1] Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 114.

[2] Quoted from the "Ratio verae theologiae" by Louis Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, translated by Francis X. Murphy (Westminster, Md., 1959), pp. 166-167.

Similar arguments were raised by Erasmus against pilgrimages. Those Christians who thought they could earn merit for themselves by visiting Jerusalem would better serve their purpose by staying home and living according to the example of Christ.[3] For a Christian to leave his wife and children alone and unsupported, and to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Rome where he had no particular business, was a prime example of foolishness.[4] In summary, Erasmus was unwilling to condemn the veneration of saints and pilgrimages as inherently evil, but he raised serious questions about their value as they were commonly practiced.

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1. Erasmus, Praise of Folly, pp. 57-63.

2. Enchiridion, p. 99. At least in his early years Erasmus was not completely opposed to saint veneration. In a letter written in 1497 he gave sole credit for his recovery from an attack of fever to St. Genevieve, Allen, I, 164-165: "Nuper in quartanam incideramus, sed convaluimus confirmatique sumus non opera medici, tametsi adhibeamus, sed unius divae Genovefae, virginis nobilissimae, cuius ossa penes canonicos regulares servata cotidie monstris choruscant et adorantur."

3. Allen, III, 413.

4. Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 70.

Superstitions were a second kind of perversion of ecclesiastical practices of the day. These superstitions were keeping people from the true Christian faith. Erasmus referred to the whole of the Christian life as an "ocean of superstition" which the priests not only allowed but even fostered because of the income they derived from it.[1]

Letters of Obscure Men is full of passages in which the authors made fun of the clergy for their superstitious beliefs. In one such passage, Gratius is sent a superstitious ritual to perform to keep the wenches from bothering him in the middle of the night.[2] Brant described the kind of fool who relied neither on God nor on the good advice of his doctor to heal his sickness, but instead turned to superstitious magical treatments.[3] Pürstinger depicted the townsmen he knew who "follow strange superstitions."[4]

Conditions in the monasteries were the third aspect of ecclesiastical life that came under criticism. Erasmus was critical of the monasteries because they had little religion beyond liturgical services and ceremonies.[5] However, he was

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1. Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 58.

2. EOV, pp. 103-104, 368-369.

3. Ship of Fools, p. 149. Narrenschiff, p. 40: "Fool he who any doctor seeks/And fails to follow what he speaks/ And listens but to witches' chatter/And meets his death through magic patter,/Their magic, foolish medicaments,/ And lands in hell for lack of sense."

4. Onus ecclesiae, pp. 36-37: "peregrinas superstitiones sequuntur."

5. Epistles of Erasmus, III, 209-210. Allen, III, 184.

not completely opposed to the existence of monasteries. He granted that the monastic life might be appropriate for some people, but he felt that it should be entered into carefully and relatively late in life.[1]

One of the most disturbing situations was the method by which monks were sometimes recruited. Erasmus was very critical of those monks who, out of self-interest, used every means to entice someone into the monastery: "wherever they stumble across a man convalescing from sin into a better life, they try immediately, with outrageous inducements, threats, and blandishments, to steer him into monastic life, as if there were no Christians outside of a cowl."[2] The monastic life was not the pinnacle of piety, but a kind of life for which some were more suited than others. Therefore, it should be neither encouraged nor discouraged.[1] The procedure sometimes used to fill the monasteries was also denounced by Bishop Pürstinger. Too often, the nobles sent into the monasteries only those sons who because of bodily infirmities would be useless to them in the world.[2] The point that both Erasmus and Pürstinger were making was the same: only those who voluntarily, and out of religious commitment, assumed the monastic life could live it worthily. It was no wonder that, when so many were in the monasteries by deception or coercion, conditions were deteriorating.

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 366. Allen, II, 309: "Sed non est nunc animus adversus ordines depugnare, sit hoc aut illud vitae genus huic aut illi commodum aut etiam necessarium, probetur nodus insolubilis. Quo sanctior, quo magis ardua professio est, hoc circunspectus, lentius ac serius esset suscipienda; satis mature, si ante annum quadragesimum, mea quidem sententia." The influence of the conditions surrounding his own entry into the monastery and his long, and finally successful endeavor to be removed from his vows is evident in Erasmus' comments. In a letter written in 1516 Erasmus told the story of a young boy who was induced to enter a monastery even though his nature was not suited for it. It is now clear to biographers that Erasmus was describing his own experience. See Epistles of Erasmus, II, 339-361. Allen, II, 293-306. It is in the same letter that Erasmus pointed out that boyhood was certainly not the time to make so crucial and difficult a decision as taking monastic vows.

[2] Enchiridion, p. 198.

The morality and religious character of the monks also incurred criticism. The monks were often accused of greed, loose morals, and laziness. Murner criticized monks for supporting themselves on money taken from the poor.[3] Pürstinger was convinced that moral conditions had declined in the cloisters so that they had lost their ascetical character.[4] Since the so called "religious" kept as far as possible from

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1. Allen, I, 374: "Monachatus non est pietas, sed vitae genus pro suo cuique corporis ingeniique habitu vel utile vel inutile. Ad quod equidem ut te ne adhortor, ita ne dehorter quidem."

2. Pürstinger, Onus ecclesiae, p. 27: "claudi aut in aliqua parte deformes et debiles, quasi mundo inutiles licet deo exercrabiles." Cf. Murner, NB, p. 32: "Darumb ich warn ein edelman,/Wil er im todt kein flůchen han,/Syn kindt sol er mit gwalt nit zwingen,/Unwillig in ein closter bringen."

3. NB, p. 112: "Dann kompt der mŭnch ouch mit dem sack,/ So gibt der pur, was er vermag,/Weitzen, korn, kess und zibel:/Gibt er nit, so sicht er übel."

4. Onus ecclesiae, p. 28.

religion and were instead known for their idleness and laziness, Erasmus believed that "perhaps it would be to the advantage of the state if the number of monasteries were limited."[1]

Most of the critics had no opposition to the monastic orders if they could be reformed in the image of their ideals. Taking monastic vows was an individual decision to be made relatively late in life and without threat or compulsion. As long as these conditions were met and the levels of morality and piety were raised, they had no desire to abolish monasteries. Their goal was to make the actual conform more closely to the ideal. However, as matters then stood, the monasteries were one of the most frequently criticized aspects of ecclesiastical life.

When all parts of German society are considered, the perversion of ecclesiastical practices most frequently criticized was the financial exploitation of the German people by the Roman Church. It was at this point that religious renewal and rising nationalism came together.[2] Nearly all Germans who

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1. The Education of a Christian Prince, translated by Lester K. Born ("Records of Civilizations: Sources and Studies," vol. XXVII; New York, 1936), p. 226. Cf. Praise of Folly, p. 85.

2. This has been extensively discussed in the literature on the German humanists. In his standard work on Renaissance historiography, W.K. Ferguson comments on the second of these elements: "a powerful strain of patriotic sentiment ran through German humanism from Konrad Celtis to Ulrich von Hutten and aroused a vital interest in German history," The Renaissance in Historical Thought (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 33. On German humanism and the writing of history see

discussed church reform during this time period included in their discussion complaints about the financial burden of the church on the Germans.

Pürstinger complained about papal interference in German church affairs.[1] The Roman Church imposed all possible monetary penalties on the Germans, yet even so did not maintain local German churches.[2] Perhaps his most serious complaint was that the power of the keys was used to oppress the poor.[3]

Among the German humanists, criticism of the church's financial exploitation of the German nation was prevalent in the works of Ulrich von Hutten, Conrad Celtis, and Jakob Wimpfeling.[4] The following statement from Conrad Celtis illustrates their position:

Paul Joachimsen, Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtschreibung in Deutschland unter den Einfluss des Humanismus (Leipzig, 1910). Nationalistic ideals were important to many of the humanists and perhaps for some they were the over-riding concern. The humanists added their influence to the rising patriotic movement, but they were not solely responsible for the developing national feeling. Cf. Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p. 93. See the same author's "Ideas of Liberty in German Humanism," Church History, XXXI (1962), 336-349. See also the old but still helpful article by Friedrich von Bezold, "Konrad Celtis, 'der deutsche Erzhumanist,' " Historische Zeitschrift, XLIX (1883), 1-45; 193-228.

[1] Onus ecclesiae, p. 25.

[2] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[3] Ibid., p. 22: "claves ecclesiae sunt in abusu et servitute sinioniae et ambitionis vitia enim ferme curialum celari negarique vix possunt."

[4] Hutten's views, particularly those he published in German, will be discussed in the sixth chapter.

> From the south we are oppressed by a sort of distinguished slavery, and under the impulse of greed, that old and accursed aid to the acquirement of comfort and luxury, new commercial ventures are continually established, by which our country is drained of its wonderful natural wealth while we pay to others what we need for ourselves.[1]

Jakob Wimpfeling expressed his concern about the economic health of Germany. German lands were desolate due to the many wars that had been fought there. The scarcity of laborers left a great deal of the land uncultivated. Rich veins of minerals had been exhausted. A part of the economic deterioration was due to the high apostolic annates which the bishops and archbishops had to pay to Rome.[2]

In 1510 Maximilian decided to attempt church reform within the empire and turned to Wimpfeling for specific guidance.[1] Maximilian had in mind something akin to the Pragmatic Sanction of France which would give the German church liberties similar to those enjoyed by the church in France. He got from Wimpfeling far less--ten grievances which were basically identical to the ones that had been discussed at the diets for decades. Spitz suggests that at this crucial moment in history, Wimpfeling lost his courage. The result was a warning about rebellion against the Pope instead of a new approach to church reform.[2]

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[1] Selections, pp. 46-47. Spitz places Celtis on the left wing among the German humanists, but notes that "he was a complex bundle of conflicting characteristics" (Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 106-107). The tension in interpreting Celtis results from the combination of his strong criticism of the church with the fact that "he placed credulity in medieval practices soon to be swept away by the Reformation" (Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p. 116).

[2] ALF, p. 522: "Admonendus etiam videtur summus pontifex, quod per varia bella, terrae Germanorum passim desolatae sunt, ac per crebras mortalitates numerus viventium diminutus. Sicque ob paucitatem cultorum, agri pro magna parte inculti iacent, & ipsa thelonea diversis eventibus attenuata, & venae minerales exhaustae sunt, pereuntque indies proventus, ex quibus archiepiscopi & episcopi (aliis etiam honestis & necessariis impensis gravati) sedi apostolicae annatam persolvere possint." In "Jakob Wimpfeling und die Erhaltung der katholischen Kirche in Schlettstadt," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, n.f. XIII (1898), 88, Paul Kalkoff identifies Wimpfeling's favorite theme as the interference of the Curia in the affairs of the German church. In "Wimpfelings kirchliche Unterwerfung," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, n.f. XXI (1906), 264, he contines that line of thought citing Wimpfeling's favorite theme as the greed of Rome.

Among Wimpfeling's grievances were the numerous dispensations, suspensions, and revocations used against the German people by means of papal bulls, privileges, and letters.[3] Wimpfeling disapproved of the fact that the election of prelates could be challenged, rejected, or thrown back to Rome.[4] He was opposed to the practice of reserving benefices and important church offices by the cardinals and secretaries.[1] Money was wasted in the struggle for ecclesiastical favors.[2] Annates could be demanded immediately and mercilessly; sometimes more than was valid was extorted on account of new officials and their servants.[3] New indulgences were permitted in order to collect additional money.[4] Under the pretext of financing war against the Turks, the church collected the tenth; but no expedition ever resulted.[5] Finally, ecclesiastical cases which could have been decided in Germany were carried to courts in Rome.[6]

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[1] See H. Ulmann, "Studie über Maximilian's I. Plan einer deutscher Kirchenreform im Jahre 1510," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, III (1879), 199-219.

[2] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 55-57. Wimpfeling is the best example of the humanist who strongly criticized the church, but remained loyal to it to the end of his life. As Spitz puts it, "but of Wimpfeling's true loyalties when forced to choose between papa and patria there can be no question" (p. 57). The "Gravamina nationis Germaniae" is in ALF, pp. 519-520.

[3] ALF, p. 519: "Quod ad servandas bullas, pacta, privilegia, & litteras, ab antecessoribus, absque omni derogatione concessas, successores pontifices, teneri se non arbitrantur, immo per crebras dispensationes, suspensiones, revocationes ad cuiuscunque (etiam vilis) personae instantiam contraveniunt."

[4] Ibid.: "Quod electiones praelatorum quandoque reiiciuntur."

Complaints were made about specific techniques which the church used to exploit financially the German people. Pürstinger was shocked when thirty-one cardinals were appointed the same day in 1517 in order to produce higher revenue for the Pope.[1] The sale of sacramental absolution likewise offended his sense of propriety.[2] He believed that indulgences should be discarded because they were indiscreetly published and offered for the sake of financial gain.[3] Erasmus, too, complained about the traffic in indulgences as a financial hardship on the people.[4] He remarked in 1524 that one had to laugh at the kind of people who lived a profligate life but nevertheless trusted in indulgences.[5]

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[1] ALF, p. 520: "Quod beneficia & dignitates maiores, cardinalibus & protonotariis reservantur."

[2] Ibid.: "Quod expectativae gratiae absque numero conceduntur, & multae interdum ad unum collatorem. Unde surgunt quotidianae lites, & pecuniae dilapidantur."

[3] Ibid.: "Quod annatae absque dilatione & sine misericordia (etiam episcopis intra paucos annos mortuis) exiguntur, interdum plus, quam debeatur, extorquetur, propter nova officia & novos familiares."

[4] Ibid.: "Indulgentiae novae cum revocatione aut suspensione veterum (laicis contra clerum murmurantibus) ad corradendas pecunias conceduntur."

[5] Ibid.: "Decimae sub praetextu expugnandorum Turcarum exiguntur, nulla expeditione subsecuta."

[6] Ibid.: "Causae, quae in Germania . . . terminari poterant, ad tribunalia Romana indistincte trahuntur."

In a later chapter we shall see the way that dissatisfaction with the financial exploitation of Germany by the church permeated the reform endeavors of secular leaders. To the critics we have noted so far, the church had become so interested in financial gain that it had lost the vision of its ideals. For both religious and patriotic reasons, they hoped that the vision would be recaptured and the church would thus be reformed.

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1. Onus ecclesiae, p. 22.

2. Ibid., p. 30.

3. Ibid., p. 17.

4. In the introduction by Craig R. Thompson to Erasmus' Inquisitio de fide ("Yale Studies in Religion," vol. XV; New Haven, 1950), p. 7, Thompson gives credit to Preserved Smith for pointing out to him the resemblance between Erasmus' view on indulgences in the preface to the 1518 edition of the Enchiridion and Luther's ninety-five theses. The passage from Erasmus is in Allen, III, 372. For Erasmus' comments on the "lowly origin" of indulgences, see Allen, III, 483: "Ab his rursus ortas apparet quas nunc vulgo vocant indulgentias."

5. Allen, I, 11: "Quidam illic irridet sodalem, qui quum esset perditae vitae, tamen fideret bullis indulgentiariis."

E. Theological Criticism

The fourth recurring theme of ecclesiastical criticism centered around theologians and their work. It will be important to consider here whether this theological criticism was aimed at the method of the theologians or the content of their theology.

The Letters of Obscure Men called for a reform of theology. One of the last letters in the series told of an encounter between one of the theologians of the church and a sympathizer of Reuchlin who applied a prophecy from the book of Zephaniah to the Cologne theologians. God will reform the church by means of learned men such as Erasmus and Reuchlin and will purge the church by sweeping away the sophistries of the theologians and thus will restore to the church primitive and true theology. The supporter of Reuchlin described the theologians and their

> sorry, misty, and bootless Theology, which a few centuries ago they took to their bosoms, deserting the ancient and learned Theologians who walked in the true light of the Holy Writ. Knowing neither the Latin, the Greek, nor the Hebrew tongue, they cannot understand the Scriptures. Therefore, casting aside the veracious and primitive Theology, they do naught but dispute, and wrangle, and moot unprofitable questions. And in so doing they declare that they are defending the Catholic Faith, notwithstanding that there are none among the disputants who attack the Faith. And thus to no purpose do they spend their days, and do not advantage the Church of God. If, indeed, their disputations were of any profit, they could turn them to account in the service of the faith of the Catholic Church by journeying throughout the world and preaching God's Word, as did the Apostles, and convincing the Greeks that they should come again into union with the Church of

Rome.[1]

Other humanists added their voices to this criticism of theology. Justus Jonas wrote to Johannes Lang in 1519 describing the critical situation that he saw developing. Because of the limitations placed on theologians by Eck, all were silent; they had ceased working on the languages out of fear; the rebirth of the glory of the cross had been abandoned; Erasmian and evangelical wisdom had been destroyed.[2] In the mind of Jonas, the _christiana respublica_ had decayed and the study of all profitable things was neglected. Lectures were omitted, the orders had degenerated, the priests lived in luxury and burned with avarice, and even the word of Christ was disregarded.[3]

Beatus Rhenanus complained about those priests and sophists among the theologians who taught Jewish doctrines. He wanted the theologians to give the people genuine and sincere expositions based on Augustine, Ambrose, Cyprian, or Jerome, rather than the interpretations of Scotus or Gabriel

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[1] _EOV_, pp. 237-238, 493.

[2] Jonas, _Briefwechsel_, I, 28: "propter copulata Eccii et Summalarios subito silebunt omnia, linguae cessabunt, renascens crucis gloria evacuabitur, Erasmica et evangelica scientia destruetur."

[3] _Ibid._, I, 41: "Lapsa est christiana respublica, neglecta iacuerunt studia omnium bonarum rerum. Hinc iacuerunt neglectae scholae, hinc degenerarunt ordines, hinc sacerdotum luxus et avariciae quasi imitatio. Hinc annonae spiritualis penuria, hinc illa fames non panis neque vini, sed audiendi verbum Domini. Etenim ubi verbum Christi negligitur . . . ."

Biel.[1]

More radical criticism of the content of scholastic theology came from men like Melanchthon and Carlstadt. Melanchthon believed that scholastic theology had obscured grace, the Scriptures and Christ.[2] The impious scholastics evaluated piety by works, and not by faith.[3] Melanchthon desired for the church freedom from the yoke of Roman tyranny and the opinions of the scholastics.[4] Carlstadt felt that medieval theology had placed too much importance on good works and not enough importance on the necessity of the grace of God.[5]

The Letters of Obscure Men lampooned the theologians of that day for being so concerned about matters of no importance. For example, in one letter Gratius was asked if it was a sin to eat an egg with a chicken in it on Friday.[1] As Erasmus saw it, the theologians thought they were supporting the universal church by the power of their syllogisms, and so busied themselves with these trifles that they had no time left to study the Scripture.[2] In 1521 Melanchthon described the theologians of his day and their "silly nonsense, frivolous questions, and proud opinions" which were full of errors. The result was "impudent blasphemy against the true Gospel."[3]

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[1] Rhenanus, Briefwechsel, p. 123: "Et causam non aliam reperio, quam quod sacerdotes per summalorios istos et sophisticos theologos decepti ethnicam et Iudaicam doctrinam docent. De vulgo sacerdotum loquor. Neque enim me latet te tuique similes purissimam Christi philosophiam ex ipsis fontibus populo proponere, non Scoticis aut Gabrielicis interpretationibus depravatam, sed ab Augustino, Ambrosio, Cypriano, Hieronymo, germane et sincere expositam."

[2] Werke, II/1, 161; II/1, 40; I, 69.

[3] Ibid., II/1, 52: "Impii homines, pietatem ab operibus aestimantes et non potius a spiritu et fide!"

[4] Ibid., I, 131: "ab illo iugo Romanae tyrannidis et scholasticarum opinionum liberati."

[5] For Carlstadt's theses on this subject "contra communem," and "contra omnes quasi scholasticos," see Th. Kolde, "Wittenberger Disputationsthesen aus den Jahren 1516-1522," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, XI (1890), 451-454. The standard work on Carlstadt is Hermann Barge, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (2 vols.; Leipzig, 1905). On the theses see I, 70-72.

The works of Erasmus were full of criticism of theologians and theology. He made it clear that he was not critical of theology itself but was poking fun at "some pseudo-theologians of our time whose brains are rotten, their language barbarous, their intellects dull, their learning a bed of thorns, their manners rough, their life hypocritical,

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1. EOV, pp. 185-187, 445-447. Gratius was also asked to decide whether it was a mortal or venial sin to tip one's hat by mistake to a Jew, and whether to do so was an ordinary, episcopal, or papal case (EOV, pp. 8-12, 294-296).

2. Praise of Folly, p. 83.

3. Werke, I, 124: "Porro mihi consideranti paulo attentius scholasticam istam, quam vocant, Theologiam, praeter pueriles nugas, frivolas quaestiones, stultas opiniones plus errorum docere videtur, quam ulla unquam haeresis adeoque in universum nihil aliud esse scholastica doctrina, quam impudentes blasphemiae adversus veritatem Evangelii."

their talk full of venom, and their hearts as black as ink."[1] Their arguments were so subtle that even the apostles themselves would need help in discussing theological topics with them.[2] The universities discussed little of evangelical doctrine. The theologians' sermons were full of remarks about the power of the pope and the opinions of modern authors, but little about Christ.[3] They molded the Scriptures to suit their opinions, as if the Bible were made of wax; and they acted as judges to punish those who did not subscribe to all their opinions.[4]

It was the methods of the scholastic theologians that received the brunt of the criticism. In a letter to Jonas in 1519, Erasmus described the subtleties of the Scotists as "lifeless" and "worthless."[5] In Paraclesis Erasmus expressed his preference for the Christian who exhibited what Christ taught over the Christian who understood the thorny complexities of theology.[1] Celtis recalled that it was in Cologne

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, I, 144. Allen, I, 192-193: "sed in nostrae tempestatis theologastros quosdam iocari libuit, quorum cerebellis nihil putidius, lingua nihil barbarius, ingenio nihil stupidius, doctrina nihil spinosius, moribus nihil asperius, vita nihil fucatius, oratione nihil virulentius, pectore nihil nigrius."

[2] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 79.

[3] Christian Humanism, p. 141. Allen, IV, 104.

[4] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 83.

[5] The letter is included in Jonas, Briefwechsel, I, 23. There is general agreement that Erasmus' experience at the University of Paris was partially responsible for his negative reaction to scholasticism. For example see Paul Mestwerdt, Die Anfänge des Erasmus: Humanismus und "Devotio Moderna" p. 317: "Wir müssen urteilen, dass die nähere Kenntnis, die Erasmus in Paris von der Scholastik gewann, ihn nur zu einem verstärkten Misstrauen und Widerspruch gegen die ganze Art ihrer Theologie getrieben hat." The opinion that Erasmus held of the scholastics is frequently discussed in the literature.

Chr. Dolfen's dissertation at Münster was the first full study of the problem; see *Die Stellung des Erasmus von Rotterdam zur Scholastischen Methode* (Osnabrück, 1936). In two articles Edward Surtz argues that Erasmus did not want to drive out scholastic philosophy and theology but wanted to moderate their influence and insure that other approaches were used as well: Edward Surtz, " 'Oxford Reformers' and Scholasticism," *Studies in Philology*, LXVII (1950), 547-556, and *ibid*., "John Fisher and the Scholastics," *Studies in Philology*, LV (1958), 136-153. Bouyer suggests that Erasmus found fault with the scholastics because of their misuse of Scripture: "they do not look for the true meaning of the biblical texts, but instead try to make use of them in problems that were not the concern of the sacred authors" (quoted in *Erasmus and His Times*, p. 159). Rudolf Padberg, *Personaler Humanismus: das Bildungsverständnis des Erasmus von Rotterdam und seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart* ("Schriften zur Pädagogik und Katechetik," Hft. 12; Paderborn, 1964), notes Erasmus' criticism of the haughty pride of the theologians: "Sie leben in lächerlicher Einbildung und sehen hochmütig auf die anderen Leute herab" (p. 50). Erasmus also disliked the way the theologians built up hedges around themselves by means of the complexities of their craft: "Ihre uneinnehmbare Festung ist wie eine Hecke von magistralen Definitionen, Konclusionen, Korrolarien und Propositionen, die bald explicite, bald implicite zu verstehen seien. Dazu besitzen sie ein raffiniertes System von Schlupflöchern und Distinktionen, so dass niemand sie fassen kann. Mit ihren Instantien, Formalitäten, Quidditäten und Ecceitäten strotzen die Schulen der Realisten, der Nominalisten, der Thomisten, Albertisten, Scotisten, Occamisten und andere nur so vor Gelehrsamkeit" (p. 50). Padberg argues that Erasmus was more interested in practical than in systematic theology: "Erasmus ist aber kein Systematiker, sondern Pädagoge und Seelsorger" (p. 65). Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls, *Die Theologie des Erasmus* (2 vols.; "Theologische Zeitschrift," vol. I, 1; Basel, 1966), I, 233, compares Erasmus to the reform theologians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly John Gerson. They were more interested in edifying works dealing with pastoral care than in logical presentations of the late scholastics.

[1] *AW*, pp. 145-146: "Neque enim ob id, opinor, quisquam sibi Christianus esse videatur, si spinosa molestaque verborum perplexitate de instantibus, de relationibus, de quidditstibus ac formalitatibus disputet, sed si quod Christus docuit et exhibuit, id teneat exprimatque."

that he "learned to introduce misleading sophistries by tortuous syllogism, and all the other lumber of contentious dialectic."[1] In his preface to Nemo, Hutten discussed the scholastic method and ridiculed its system of argumentation and syllogisms.[2]

One of the things which most irritated the humanists was the pride of the theologians who opposed the rebirth of learning. Jonas described Eck as impudent, stubborn, and pretentious in his relations with Erasmus.[3] Erasmus was disturbed by those theologians whose pride led them to overestimate their own importance. In a letter to Martin Dorp, he explained that he intended Praise of Folly to condemn only

> those men who see in these quibblings the beginning and the end, the stem and stern, as it were, of the ship of theology, and who in their verbal wars, as St. Paul calls them, are so engrossed that they have no time to read the Gospels, or the Prophets, or the writings of the early Fathers.[4]

Mistress Folly described the security the theologians felt in their own importance: "They are happy in their self-love, and as if they already inhabited the third heaven they look down from a height on all other mortal men as on creatures that crawl on the ground, and they come near to pitying them."[1]

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[1] Selections, pp. 22-23.

[2] Opera, I, 175-184, especially p. 178.

[3] Briefwechsel, I, 27.

[4] Christian Humanism, p. 71. Allen, II, 101: "Moria nihil attingit istiusmodi. Tantum iocatur in ociosas illorum disceptatiunculas, nec has ipsas tamen simpliciter improbat, verum eos damnat qui in his solis theologicae rei puppim, ut aiunt, et proram collocant, quique logomachiis, ut divus appellavit Paulus, eiusmodi sic occupantur ut nec evangelicas nec propheticas nec apostolicas litteras vacet legere."

The superiority complex of the theologians was satirized in the Letters of Obscure Men. They considered themselves to be more important than the Jurists and Poets, and desired to have all honor given them. The Letters have one of the opponents of Reuchlin promise that

> we will drive Poetry from the whole of Germany, and we will bring it about that the Jurists shall not dare to utter a word when they are in the presence of Theologians; for they shall fear lest the Inquisitor be set upon them, and they be burned for heretics--as I hope will yet happen to Johann Reuchlin, by God's aid, whose judges we are: for as soldiers defend justice upon Earth, so do we defend the Church by our disputations and sermons.[2]

Erasmus observed the pride of the theologians in the childish wars between the theological schools.[3] In 1518 he wrote a letter to a young German humanist expressing concern about the theological battles raging at that time: "I am more sorry than could be believed, to hear how dissension is spreading among you every day, while I wonder at theologians and professors of a most holy religion not being ashamed to encourage such disturbances, of which it is impossible to say what may be the issue."[1]

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[1] Erasmus, Praise of Folly, p. 78.

[2] EOV, pp. 204, 461. Cf. pp. 37, 313. For examples of how easily the theologians thought their honor could be damaged, see pp. 34, 311, and 89, 356.

[3] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 558. Also Desiderius Erasmus, The Complaint of Peace, translated by Thomas Paynell and modernized by William Jones Hirten (New York, 1946), pp. 114-115.

Melanchthon also disliked this proud contentiousness among the theologians. He urged that Christian doctrine be recalled into the light which the "impious pontifical constitutions and the trifling disputations of the sophists had nearly extinguished."[2] Pürstinger characterized the "doctors" as so disputatious that they found happiness in their "dialectical chattering."[3]

Most of the criticism of theology and theologians was aimed at theological method, not content. However, as we have seen, some of the critics argued that invalid or inappropriate theological methodology had obscured theological truth. Thus the line between criticism of method and criticism of content is not always clear. Some critics felt theologians needed only to work more seriously. Others felt the situation was so bad that the end product of the endeavors of the theologians did not interpret or explain the gospel, but perverted it.

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, III, 357. Allen, III, 296-297: "Dissidium istud in dies gliscere vehementius quam credi possit doleo. Demiror autem non pudere theologos et sanctissimae religionis professores tumultus istiusmodi concitare, quorum exitus cuiusmodi sit futurus incertum est."

[2] Werke, I, 63: "qui Christianam doctrinam impiis pontificum constitutionibus et nugacibus scholarum sophismatis prope extinctam in lucem revocavit." Cf. II/1, 6-7.

[3] Onus ecclesiae, p. 19: "dialecticae garrulitates."

F. Criticism of Education

Dissatisfaction with the way the church carried out its educational responsibilities was the fifth recurring theme of criticism. Jonas pointed out that the study of all profitable or worthwhile subjects had been neglected.[1] Wimpfeling charged that many people in his day, including the priests, were contemptuous of good literature. He considered such people to be "asses," and as long as they remained so, their opinions were of little value.[2]

Conrad Celtis felt that the bishops of the church were more interested in hunting than in their proper task, education:

> Even among our bishops and, to use an ancient word, flamens, to whom the care and heritage of letters ought rightly to belong, there is such contempt for literature and those who practise it that they prefer the beasts of the forests, sharp-eared dogs, neighing and mettlesome horses, and, like Rhea Silvia, Clodius and effeminate Sardanapalus, certain other delights and pastimes.[3]

In Brant's opinion education had failed to develop the moral character of students. Those who should have been studying went carousing, roistering, and drinking and "Thus money spent to train and school/Has often gone to rear a fool."[1] Bishop Pürstinger believed that the current educational process stirred youth up to things of the world, to lying and deceitful words and deeds.[2] Instead of inculcating Christian ideals and training youths to be responsible members of society, education was leading young people further away from Christian behavior.[3]

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[1] Briefwechsel, I, 41: "neglecta iacuerunt studia omnium bonarum rerum." Murner's satire depicted the "verachtung des dichters" (NB, pp. 5-7.

[2] "Multos heu invenies, etiam inter sacerdotes, omnium bonarum litterarum contemptores: asini sint, asini maneant, nos eorum sententiam pro nihilo ducamus," quoted by Gustav Knod, "Wimpfeling und die Universität Heidelberg," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, n.f. I (1886), 327.

[3] Selections, pp. 52-53.

These five themes of criticism summarize the evaluation of ecclesiastical conditions by humanists and churchmen. They reflect substantive and extensive desire for improvement of the situation. To that extent they reveal a desire for church reform.

However, it would be incorrect to leave the impression that these critics were convinced that ecclesiastical conditions were at a low point. Erasmus is the best example of these critics who could despairingly describe the situation in one passage and optimistically view the future in another.

Erasmus believed a "golden age" of civilization was in the near future:

> But at the present moment I could almost wish to be young again, for no other reason but this, that I anticipate the near approach of a golden age; so clearly do

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1. Ship of Fools, pp. 124-125. Narrenschiff, pp. 29-30.

2. Onus ecclesiae, p. 36: "Immo ad omnia mundana provocantur maxime ad mendacia dolosa opprobriosaque verba et facta."

3. Only the criticism of education has been noted here. In the next chapter the educational program of the humanists will be discussed.

> we see the minds of princes, as if changed by inspiration, devoting all their energies to the pursuit of peace.[1]

Thus, despite his criticism of the church, Erasmus could sound a note of optimism: "I am led to a confident hope, that not only morality and Christian piety, but also a genuine and purer literature may come to renewed life or greater splendour."[2]

The primary basis for the hopeful outlook of Erasmus was his confidence in the leadership of the church. He was optimistic about the effects of the pontificate of Leo X on piety and learning.[3] Under Leo the ills of the church would be cured "not by severe measures, not by amputations or brandings or disagreeable medicine, but by good counsel and prudence, by gentleness and moderation."[1] It is doubtful whether Erasmus wrote these lines to describe what had happened or to suggest what should happen, although the second alternative seems more likely.

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 506. Allen, II, 487: "Sed tamen in praesentia pene libeat aliquantisper reivuenescere, non ob aliud nisi quod videam futurum ut propediem aureum quoddam saeculum exoriatur. Adeo cernimus ceu divinitus immutatos principum animos ad pacis concordiaeque studium totis viribus incumbere . . . ."

[2] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 506. Allen, II, 488: "nimirum certam in spem vocor ut non solum probi mores pietasque Christiana, verum etiam purgatiores illae ac germanae literae ac pulcherrimae disciplinae partim reviviscant partim enitescant." In 1517 Erasmus was convinced that the battle had been won, and he encouraged Capito to finish the job: "Well then, take you the torch from us. The work will henceforth be a great deal easier and cause for less hatred and envy. We have lived through the first shock," quoted by Johann Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation, p. 132. Erasmus' shock and disappointment in the years that followed can easily be imagined.

[3] He expressed his optimism to the pope himself: "ut inguo tuis felicissimus auspiciis tuisque sanctissimis consiliis tria quaedam precipua generis humani bona restitutum iri videam; pietatem illam vere Christianam multis modis collapsam; optimas literas, partim neglectas hactenus, partim corruptas; et publicam ac perpetuam orbis Christiani concordiam, pietatis et eruditionis fontem parentemque" (Allen, II, 527-528).

In those days when Rome was considered to be the arch-enemy by the more nationalistically oriented humanists, Erasmus even had positive things to say about the ecclesiastical court at Rome. In 1515 he noted that he left behind him in Rome "so many excellent Cardinals, (in) so many distinguished bishops, and (in) so many learned men . . . ."[2] Erasmus was so impressed with the atmosphere in Rome that he desired a second visit there. Again in 1515 he wrote:

> I cannot but be tormented by the longing for Rome, whenever it comes back to my mind, what freedom, what light, what walks, what libraries, what honeyed converse with the most learned men, how many princes, who were my kindest friends, I left behind me in quitting the city.[3]

Thus, at least for Erasmus, one of the most prominent critics of conditions within the church, the situation was not completely hopeless. The vacillation of Erasmus in evaluating ecclesiastical conditions is symptomatic of an examination of the question of ecclesiastical criticism as church reform. There is little doubt that there were those who raised serious criticisms of the church. Yet even the presence of these critics indicates that all was not lost within the church, for they themselves were products of the church they criticized. The critics were disturbed about the situation, but the presence of other critics of like mind led them to think that perhaps a new day was dawning.

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 199. Allen, II, 82: "idque non vi neque severitate, veluti sectionibus, inusturis aut alioqui tristibus pharmacis sed consilio, sed prudentia, sed animi moderatione, sed mansuetudine."

[2] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 186. Allen, II, 76: "Unde factum est quod Romae in tot egregiis cardinalibus, in tot ornatissimis episcopis, in tot eruditissimis viris reliqueram."

[3] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 192. Allen, II, 70: "Et tamen non possum non discrutiari Romanae urbis desyderio, quoties animo recursat quam libertatem, quod theatrum, quam lucem, quas deambulationes, quas bibliothecas, quam mellitas eruditissimorum hominum confabulationes, quot mei studiosos orbis proceres relicta Roma reliquerim."

This chapter has attempted to show the extent of ecclesiastical criticism by examining the books printed in Germany from 1510 to 1520. The purpose was to discover who the critics were whose views were publicly known. Secondly, it has attempted to summarize the major areas of ecclesiastical criticism. These themes of criticism imply the ideal by which ecclesiastical conditions were judged and toward which the church should be reformed.

However, these ideals were only implied. Most of this criticism was made under the assumption that Christian ideals were well known to everyone. The effort was aimed at raising complaints instead of describing specifically the ideal toward which one should strive. For example, the criticism was made repeatedly that the clergy was not fulfilling its responsibilities, but it was not often suggested in detail what these responsibilities were. It was proposed that the church be recalled to Christian ideals, without explaining what ideals the author had in mind. In too many cases these critics raised serious and proper questions about ecclesiastical conditions but failed to provide any new help in improving the conditions.

Ecclesiastical criticism was one valid form of church reform in the early sixteenth century in Germany, and its major ideas have been summarized here. However, ecclesiastical criticism does not fulfill the concept of church reform for those who thought the situation was more serious. In their minds, a more thorough-going program for the reform of the church was necessary.

Chapter IV

THE SEARCH FOR AUTHORITY

The next two chapters examine the concept of church reform from two different perspectives. The first discusses reform in the narrower sense by describing the various standards or authorities which were proposed to bring about reform. To _re_-form, one must have a conception of the previous idealized situation to be taken as a model. In general, this chapter deals with the methodology of ecclesiastical reform. The next chapter utilizes a broader definition of reform and outlines suggestions which were made to improve the Christian life. Christian renewal, particularly in terms of devotional life and practices, was the object of this approach to reform which did not require so specific a reference to the past. Our concern there will be with the content of reform suggestions rather than with methodology.

The question of authority was crucial to sixteenth century discussions of church reform. As we shall see, many reformers turned to the past to find support for their ideas and actions in the present. They questioned innovative ideas on the popular level[1] and advocated the study of the intellectual heritage of the past on the scholarly level.[2] This tendency to look to the past makes the search for authority integral to this study of ecclesiastical reform.

A. Fear of Radical Change

This search for authority was brought about, in part, by fear of radical change. Most of the reformers in the second decade of the sixteenth century were conservative in their outlook. Even those reformers whose programs were more radical sought to identify themselves as the true restorers of primitive or ancient purity.[3] This investigation reveals that most of the reformers were at heart loyal to the church and fearful that a revolutionary approach would do the church more harm than good. The division of the church known as the Reformation was the result of the different ways loyalty to the church was expressed and was not a revolutionary movement by intention.

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[1] See, for example, the view of a bishop of the church, Berthold Pürstinger: "novas inventiones excogitant quas loco legitimorum statutorum observant" (Onus ecclesiae, p. 28).

[2] Richard Newald points to this tendency in "Renatae litterae und Reformatio. Gedanken zur Geistesgeschichte des ausgehenden Mittelalters," Historisches Jahrbuch, LXXI (1952), 139.

[3] For example, the influence of Tacitus on Hutten is seen in Hutten's glorification of primitive German society. See Holborn, Hutten, p. 45. Leonard Forster comments on Conrad Celtis: "The resurrection of the national past became one of his prime aims and was probably the most inspiring element in his teaching. He was the first to lecture on the newly discovered Germania of Tacitus and its importance for German history, and produced an edition of the text" (in Celtis, Selections, p. 11). See also L. Sponagel, Konrad Celtis und das deutsche Nationalbewusstsein (Bühl-Baden, 1939).

German humanists like Wimpfeling, Zasius, Pirckheimer, and Peutinger feared the disturbances that might follow a radical attack on the church and thus took a moderate position.[1] Erasmus represents the approach taken by many of the German humanists. In May 1521, when the disruptive tendencies in the Reformation were becoming increasingly clear to Erasmus, he wrote to Justus Jonas: "there is danger that because of the attempt to apply remedies improperly, the evil for us may be doubled."[2] There were times, according to a Greek proverb, when evil was best left alone.[3] Erasmus went so far as to admit some misgivings about his own work because of the turmoil which might result.[4] In a letter to Campeggio in 1520 Erasmus affirmed his loyalty to the church and pledged not to disagree with the institution to which he owed such a debt of gratitude. He preferred the status quo to the kind of solution to the ills of the church which would provoke new troubles. Erasmus was unconvinced that drastic remedies were necessary; but, if they were, he was certain that he was not the one to propose them.[1]

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[1] Moeller, "Die deutschen Humanisten," p. 56.

[2] Christian Humanism, p. 152. Allen, IV, 487: "ut periculum sit male tentatis remediis malum nobis conduplicetur." This letter was published by Froben in the same year in his collection of letters of Erasmus, Epistolae ad diversos.

[3] Allen, IV, 489: "Praestat malum iuxta Graecum proverbium sinere ut est, quam non dextris remediis exagitarii."

[4] Ibid., 492: "Quanquam, ut ingenue dicam, si praescissem huiusmodi seculum exoriturum, aut non scripsissem quaedam quae scripsi, aut aliter scripsissem. Sic enim prodesse cupimus omnibus ut, si fieri possit, neminem laedamus."

Erasmus believed that moderation and impartiality provided the best hope for a solution to the problems facing the church. He disagreed with those defenders of Luther who argued that the immoderateness of his opponents did not permit Luther to take a moderate stand.[2] Erasmus was adamant in his opposition to those who attacked ecclesiastical authorities--a curious viewpoint for the probable author of the satire that pictured Pope Julius II excluded from heaven by St. Peter. His criticism of attacks on ecclesiastical authorities preceded the Reformation controversy. In May 1517 Erasmus wrote to Cardinal Wolsey:

> I have advised by letter all those young German writers to control their excessive freedom of language, and certainly to abstain from any attack upon persons of authority in the church,--lest they should prejudice against literature those by whose patronage they might be able to stand up against their foes.[3]

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[1] Allen, IV, 410-411.

[2] Ibid., p. 490.

[3] Epistles of Erasmus, III, 384. It is difficult to determine to whom Erasmus was referring when he mentioned "all those young German writers." Allen's edition of the letters of Erasmus does not include a significant number of letters from Erasmus to German humanists in the few months before he wrote to Wolsey. Thus we have little evidence that there was

Each side of the Reformation controversy sought the assistance of Erasmus up to his death. His Catholic critics charged that he "laid the egg that Luther hatched," but he denied any responsibility for the movement.[1] Erasmus tried to retain an impartiality which was unappreciated on either side. He remained convinced that more could be accomplished by polite restraint than by violent attack.[2] He was so fearful of sedition against the church that he refused to take sides in the debate and rejected any step that might divide him from Christ and the church. He hoped that Luther and all Germans would follow his example.[3]

The motivation for the impartiality of Erasmus was no

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much of a letter campaign by Erasmus at this time.

The moderate approach of Erasmus has often been extolled in the literature. Margaret Mann Phillips, Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance ("Teach Yourself History Library"; London, 1949), p. 223, calls it the "middle way" of "mellow, balanced sanity" representing "the perfect work of the classical spirit tempered by the Christian ideal." Leonard Elliott-Binns, Erasmus the Reformer: A Study in Restatement ("The Hulsean Lectures," 1921-1922; London, 1925), p. 59, describes it as reform by "way of amendment." Alfons Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen nach den Enchiridion militis Christiani des Erasmus von Rotterdam (Düsseldorf, 1954), p. 28, contrasts it to the more revolutionary approach of Luther.

1. Erasmus discussed the charge in a letter to John Caesarius in Allen, V, 609: "Ego peperi ovum, Lutherus exclusit."

2. Ibid., III, 606: "Ego me, quoad licet, integrum servo, quo magis prosim bonis literis reflorescentibus. Et mihi videtur plus profici civili modestia quam impetu."

3. Ibid., IV, 459: "Christum agnosco, Lutherum non novi; Ecclesiam Romanam agnosco, quam opinor a Catholica non dissentire. Ab hac me nec mors divellet, nisi illa palam devellatur a Christo. Seditionem semper exhorrui; atque utinam eadem mens esset Luthero ac Germanis omnibus!"

doubt mixed. He did not appear, even to himself, to have been cut from the cloth martyrs are made of,[1] and the times could be dangerous for one who rebelled against authority. However, it is unfair to ascribe to Erasmus no higher motivation than self-protection. Great struggles can sometimes be resolved by a mediator; and, even if they are not, someone must remain to repair the damage when the fighting is over. Even so, it is disheartening to see a man of such promise for the future of the church playing a neutral role in these decisive and critical years.

Not all of the humanists adopted the moderate position of Erasmus and remained loyal to the Catholic Church. Men like Hutten and Celtis were much more radical in their approach to the problems plaguing the church. A generational gap developed among the humanists. In most cases, the older humanists were more conservative and remained loyal to the church while the younger ones provided vigorous leadership to the Reformation.[2]

The fear of radical change is also noticeable in the two charges which Luther's opponents brought against him. First, they argued that his divisiveness was disrupting the peace and harmony of the church. According to Eck, Luther was an enemy and corruptor of the German nobility because he led them into an uprising against the pope and the clergy--a charge to which Luther's Babylonian Captivity lends some truth.[1] The Catholic polemicist Emser accused Luther of dividing the church and the unity of Christ.[2] Thomas Murner, who desired reform but not in the way Luther proposed it, raised the similar charge that Luther was complicating the issue by pitting brother against brother, subordinate against superiors, including the pope, emperor, kings, and bishops.[3]

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[1] Allen, IV, 541: "Non omnes ad martyrium satis habent roboris. Vereor enim ne, si quid incideret tumultus, Petrum sim imitaturus."

[2] See Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 291-293, and Moeller, "Die deutschen Humanisten," pp. 51, 56.

Secondly, Luther's opponents charged that he was guilty of innovations which led the people away from the true faith. At the Leipzig Disputation Eck rejected Luther's "nova doctrina" because it was not found in the theological tradition of the church.[4] Murner believed that Luther was very dangerous to the faith of the people because he "changed falsehood into the appearance of truth."[1]

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[1] See his Gegen Martin Luthers Anklage wider Konzil von Konstanz in Sachen des Johannes Hus und des Hieronymus von Prag ("Corpus Catholicorum," vol. XIV; Münster, 1929), pp. 5-7, 11-12. See especially page 7: "er (Luther) den babst in ein hass bringe deutscher nation." He also criticized Luther for being too angry and too impatient.

[2] De disputatione Lipsicensi, quantum ad Boemos obiter deflexa est, edited by Franz Xaver Thurnhofer ("Corpus Catholicorum," vol. IV; Münster, 1921), p. 33.

[3] An den grossmächtigsten und durchlauchtigsten Adel deutscher Nation, edited by Ernest Voss ("Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," no. 153; Halle, 1899), p. 3. Hereafter cited as ADN. Murner felt that Luther had attacked the church "mit solchen ungeschickten, unchristlichen und unwarhafftigen mitten" (ADN, p. 4). Cf. Waldeman Kawerau, Thomas Murner und die deutsche Reformation ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. XXXII; Halle, 1891), pp. 30-31.

[4] Otto Seitz (ed.), Der authentische Text der Leipziger Disputation (1519) (Berlin, 1903), pp. 158-159. Hereafter cited as Seitz, LD.

There were few, if any, revolutionaries among the advocates of church reform in Germany before 1520. Reformers did not want to be known as innovators and feared the disruption of the unity of the church.[2] None of the early reformers started out with the intention of forming a new church to replace the old one. That such churches arose testifies either to the depth of the convictions of the reformers, their stubbornness, or perhaps both. Not everyone agreed with Erasmus that the more radical cures being proposed for the ills of the church were worse than the disease. Despite the fear of radical change, some were disturbed enough to be willing to go step by step toward a divided church. Perhaps they were so caught up in the seemingly inexorable chain of events that they reached the point of separation before they fully realized where they were going.

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[1] ADN, p. 3. With respect to the priesthood of all believers, a point of contention between Murner and Luther, Murner charged Luther with "allegorizing" the Bible (ADN, p. 17).

[2] For example, Luther rejected Eck's charge of being an innovator yet had doubts about his work throughout his life because he found it necessary to oppose so much of the tradition of the church. Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 8, states that Luther intended "to bring the old truth of Scripture and of dogma out of obscurity into the light" and thus did not intend a new theology. For a fascinating and human account of Luther's doubts throughout his life, see Roland Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (New York, 1950), "The Struggle for Faith," pp. 359-372.

This fear of radical change was an important factor leading to the search for authority for reform which provides the subject for this chapter. Since few people considered themselves innovators, they had to find authority for their ideas in past history or tradition.

B. The Problem of Authority

The problem of authority has been frequently discussed in its relation to the Reformation.[1] It is usually considered in terms of the understanding of Scripture that Luther or Calvin taught and the authoritative position Roman Catholics gave to tradition. R. E. Davies sees authority as the fundamental issue of the Reformation, and notes that while there was agreement on the existence of an authoritative source of religious truth, there was division over what that authoritative source was.[2]

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[1] Rupert E. Davies, The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformation (London, 1946). Brian A. Gerrish, "Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation," Scottish Journal of Theology, X (1957), 337-360. J.K.S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London, 1957). George H. Tavard, Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation (New York, 1959).

[2] The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformation, pp. 11-12. In "Quo Vadis? Tradition from Irenaeus to Humani Generis," Scottish Journal of Theology, XVI (1963), Heiko A. Oberman observes that the Scripture versus tradition argument does not clear up the confusion: "It is our contention that this confusing clamour of rival claims can only be unravelled if we abandon the time-honoured assumption that the

This chapter is not limited to a discussion of authority in terms of Scripture and/or tradition. Rather, it investigates the various kinds of authorities which were suggested in facing the issue of church reform in the early sixteenth century. The church was divided and the situation was so confused that those on opposite sides of the Reformation debate appealed to the same authorities to support their position. There was, for example, wide-spread exhortation to the use of Scripture; but differences existed between Cajėtan, Erasmus, and Melanchthon even though they all used the Bible as an authoritative source for reform. This indicates that there was more involved than a disagreement over whether one should take Scripture or tradition as the final authority in religious questions. Though it was perhaps not recognized at the time, the way one uses his authority is as important as which authority he decides to follow. This chapter illustrates both aspects of the problem of authority--the various kinds of authorities or standards that were proposed and the variety of opinion among those who advocated a particular authority.

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issue before us is that of 'Scripture or tradition.' What we are confronted with is rather the clash between two concepts of tradition" (p. 226).

C. "*Ad fontes*"

1. *Humanists*. The first standard or authority for reform to be noted is the call for a return *ad fontes*. A major element in the reform strategy of the humanists was their belief that if the church would return to the sources, the wisdom of antiquity and the Fathers from Origen to Jerome, its reform would be assured.[1] Erasmus, for example, was a reformer in the literal sense of the word. He looked back to the sources for the restoration of the early church rather than forward to a day when the church would be something new

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[1] This aspect of the program of the humanists is abundantly noted in the secondary literature. Hermelink, *Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus*, p. 15. Spitz, *Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, p. 276. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*, pp. 40-41, describes the central conception of Erasmus' program as "the necessity of returning to the original sources of pure Christianity and classical culture. Erasmus believed that the necessary reformation could be brought about only by restoring both religion and learning to their ancient purity and by clearing away the mass of barbaric accretions that had grown up around both during the past thousand years." Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation*, p. 131: "Nothing was required but restoration and purification by a return to the original, unspoilt sources of Christianity." Joachimsen suggests the chronological limits of what Erasmus meant by Christian antiquity and its significance in his thought: "Sie reicht von Origenes bis zu den lateinische Kirchenvätern. Ihr eigentlicher Repräsentant ist Hieronymous. Diese christliche Antike liefert die Mittel, die Lehre Christi in ihrem wahren Verstanden zu erfassen. Sie liefert die Waffen, mit denen Erasmus die ganze scholastische Entwicklung als Verfälschung des wahren Christentums ablehnt, ohne doch das Dogma und seine weltanschaulichen Forderungen in irgend einem Punkt direkt anzugreifen" ("Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," pp. 450-451).

and different.[1]

By his studies in Hebrew sources, Reuchlin hoped to lead the church to a purer knowledge of faith and morality. The spiritual renewal of the church would result when it discarded the conceptions of the scholastics and studied the ancient sources in their original languages.[2] In his repeated ecclesiastical and political controversies, Wimpfeling's favorite tactic was to document his arguments from the earliest and purest sources.[3]

a. "*Bonae litterae*." When the humanists discussed returning to the sources, they usually had two things in mind: literature (*bonae litterae*) and the Scriptures (including the interpretation of the Fathers). Earlier churchmen had debated the propriety of Christian studying the literature of pagan antiquity.[4] The sixteenth century humanists believed that it was proper to read the pagan authors and spent a significant part of their time preparing scholarly editions of the works of antiquity.[1] In a 1516 letter to Willibald Pirckheimer, Erasmus dedicated himself "to serve the cause of literature."[2]

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[1] Erasmus often took as his guide St. Jerome (see, for example, Allen, I, 165, 353) whom he preferred to follow over Augustine (Allen, III, 333-334).

[2] Hans Rupprich, "Johannes Reuchlin und seine Bedeutung in Europäischen Humanismus," in *Johannes Reuchlin, 1455-1522: Festgabe seiner Vaterstadt Pforzheim zur 500. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages*, edited by Manfred Krebs (Pforzheim, 1955), p. 25. For a summary of Reuchlin's works, see Christian David Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrine, Developments, and Literature* (London, 1925), pp. 206-213.

[3] However, Wimpfeling did not concur with most of the humanists that scholasticism was a deviation from those early sources. He defended scholasticism, partially on the basis of favoring tradition over innovation. Spitz, *Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, p. 44.

[4] For a discussion of this question see Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity* (London, 1939), pp. 48-66, and R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Tradition and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, England, 1954).

But for Erasmus, the study of good literature was more than a scholarly task or an academic question. Its religious purpose was to prepare the student to interpret the Scripture. In the *Enchiridion* he explained his understanding of the relationship between pagan literature and the Bible:

> Literature shapes and invigorates the youthful character and prepares one marvelously well for understanding Holy Scripture, to pounce upon which with unscrubbed hands and feet is something akin to sacrilege. Jerome chides the effrontery of those who, coming straight out of secular studies, dare to expound the Scriptures; but how much more impudent is the behavior of those people who presume to do that very same thing without even a taste of those disciplines.[3]

While emphasizing the importance of studying good literature, Erasmus agreed that certain limits should be placed on the Christian who studied the works of the pagans. Such study should be done warily and "also rapidly, like

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1. See below p. 117, footnote 1.

2. *Epistles of Erasmus*, II, 252-253. Allen, II, 236: "Nos humiles quod licet molimur et rei litterariae succurrimus pro virili." According to Otto Schottenloher, *Erasmus im Ringen um die humanistische Bildungsform* ("Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte," vol. LXI; Münster, 1933), p. 107, part of Erasmus' opposition to the scholastics was because their education was not based on the literature of antiquity: "Erasmus lässt keine Bildung gelten, die nicht eine weltliche-antike ist oder sich nicht wenigstens auf der Grundlage der antiken Literatur aufbaut."

3. *Enchiridion*, p. 51.

someone just traveling through rather than taking up residence there." Erasmus realized that some early experience in pagan literature would aid the young recruit's study of the Scriptures.[1] However, he could never quite escape his fear that, as he explained it to Capito, "under cover of a revival of ancient literature, Paganism may attempt to rear its head."[2]

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[1] Enchiridion, pp. 50, 51.

[2] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 508. Allen, II, 491: "sub obtextu priscae litteraturae renascentis caput erigere conetur paganismus." The relationship between Erasmus and the "Ciceronians" who attempted to duplicate the style of Cicero should be noted at this point. In 1528 in his Ciceronianus Erasmus spoke directly to the issue and rejected as dangerous and ridiculous those who aped the style of Cicero. See Ciceronianus, a Dialogue on the Best Style of Speaking, translated by Izora Scott ("Columbia University Contributions to Education," vol. XXI; New York, 1908). For brief discussions of the work and his criticisms of Ciceronians, see Augustin Renaudet, Études Érasmiennes, 1521-1529 (Paris, 1939), pp. 291-294, and Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation, pp. 170-173. The most substantive discussion is by Angiolo Gambaro, Il Ciceronianus di Erasmo da Rotterdam (Torino, 1950), who argues that the triumph of the gospel did not lead, in the case of Erasmus, to prejudice against the thought of antiquity.

The secondary literature reveals considerable discussion of whether there was a conflict in Erasmus between Christianity and antiquity and whether Erasmus changed his position in the 1520's. Karl August Meissinger, Erasmus von Rotterdam (2d ed.; Berlin, 1948), notes a change in Erasmus: early in his life he desired to imitate the poetry of Horace and the prose of Cicero, but later he "wendet sich gegen die leidnischen Liebhaberein derjenigen Humanisten, die Ciceronianer um jeder Preis sein wollten" (pp. 20, 35). Giuseppe Toffanin, History of Humanism, translated by Elio Gianturco (New York, 1954), p. 280, agrees that the final position of Erasmus was to place a high value on antiquity but not to imitate it slavishly. There are some differences among the commentators. Huizinga (see above) summarizes the reservations Erasmus had about the study of pagan antiquity while Walter Rüegg attempts to show that there was no conflict in Erasmus between Christianity and antiquity. See his Cicero und der Humanismus: Formale Untersuchungen über Petrarca und Erasmus (Zürich, 1946), pp. 70-71. Otto Schottenloher, In the same letter he expressed his concern that some who were Christians in name were pagans at heart. He even had misgivings about the revival of Hebrew learning, fearing that Judaism would take advantage of the revival to expand its numbers and influence.[1] Of course, Erasmus was not alone in his misgivings about the revival of the study of pagan literature.[2]

The reason for the limits on the study of bonae litterae and the fear of its consequences was the realization that it might lead to a natural religion. Among the German humanists Conrad Celtis approached most closely a purely natural religion and thus represented the kind of development many people feared. Celtis felt that one could learn about

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Erasmus im Ringen um die humanistische Bildungsform, explains the change as "der Ausdruck einer gleichsam dialektischen Entwicklung seines Geistes" (pp. 113-114). In the view of Rudolf Pfeiffer, Erasmus saw the solution not in the abandonment of Christianity for antiquity but in the proper understanding and practice of Christian freedom which permits the believer to study pagan sources. See his Humanitas Erasmiana ("Studien der Bibliothek Warburg," vol. XXII; Leipzig, 1931), p. 24. See also the discussion of Horst Rüdiger, Wesen und Wandlung des Humanismus (Hamburg, 1937), pp. 103-136.

[1] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 508. Allen, II, 491.

[2] In his address on Paul and the Scholastics at Wittenberg in 1520, Melanchthon confessed that he had damaged his mind as a boy by his study of the literature of the philosophers: "Nonnullam animi iacturam in Philosophorum literis puer feci, quam, ut spero, feliciter olim doctrina Pauli sarciet. Errant enim meo iudicio tota via, qui Philosophorum literis iuvari vitae Christianae rationes censent" (Werke, I, 34). For an English translation see Philip Melanchthon, Selected Writings, translated by Charles Leander Hill and edited by Elmer Ellsworth Flack and Lowell J. Satre (Minneapolis, Minn., 1962), p. 38. For an example of the fear of Italian paganism on the part of a churchman, see the view of Bishop Pürstinger, Onus ecclesiae, p. 20.

God, morality, and nature from the poets, philosophers, and orators of old; and thus he implicitly questioned the need for a distinctively Christian theology:

> They alone have set out for us the way to live wisely and happily and have set before us Nature, the parent of the human race and course of all things, as it were for an example and mirror of life for us to imitate. From them you will learn to praise good deeds and hate wrong-doings, from them you will learn how to console and to encourage, to persuade and to dissuade, and you will study how to contemplate the ruler of all things and Nature herself, which is the crown of human felicity.[1]

Celtis contrasted the beauty and serenity of worship in nature with the noisy shouting of an ignorant priest to an ignorant congregation.[2] He was critical of the church because he felt the theologians were so threatened by an intellectual of unusual perception that they attempted to suppress those who desired to interpret and apply the wisdom of antiquity.[3] His anti-ecclesiastical spirit, perhaps the most radical of any of the German humanists, is evident in these lines penned "To Sepulus the Superstitious":

> You marvel that I never move my lips in any church
> Murmuring through my teeth in prayer.

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[1] Selections, pp. 40-41.

[2] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 96.

[3] Selections, pp. 56-57: ". . . all those who expound the Latin poets and authors are suppressed, and anyone who reveals the work of nature and the wisdom of its director by mathematical truth or whose perception goes a little deeper than that of the common herd is considered almost sacrilegious. To such an extent is philosophy trampled under foot and frittered away by men who have distorted the most beautiful majesty of nature into incorporeal concepts, monstrous abstractions and empty chimeras, as if they were poets."

The reason is that the great divine Will of heaven
Hears the small inner voice.
You marvel that you so seldom see me
Dragging my feet into the temples of the gods.
God is within us. I do not need to meditate on Him
In painted churches.
You marvel that I love to seek the open waters
And the warm sun.
It is there that the mighty images of omnipotent
    Jupiter appears to me
There are the highest temples of God.[1]

In his day such comments gave the impression of radical criticism and a revolutionary spirit.

Though there is clearly a difference of degree between Erasmus and Celtis in their attitude toward pagan literature, they agreed that a revival of learning and the ensuing reform of the church was dependent upon the return to the sources of bonae litterae. Celtis found more positive worth there, but both worked for their restoration.

b. Bible as interpreted by the Fathers. But the return to the pure sources meant more than the revival of the study of pagan literature. In the mind of Erasmus the way to restore simplicity and to renew Christian piety was to return to the Bible and the patristic interpretation of the Scripture.[2] In words that remind one of the stand taken by Luther at the Diet of Worms, Erasmus wrote: "Finally, if any decision is to be made, I would like to see it done with reverence, not arrogance, from the divine writings and not from the petty syllogisms fabricated by men."[1] In 1516 Erasmus praised Martin Dorp for the encouragement he was giving others to study the Scripture:

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[1] Quoted by Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p. 113.

[2] Alfons Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, p. 204. Cf. ibid., p. 49: "Wo wäre eine praktische, einfache und fromme Theologie leichter zu begründen und wo wäre sie besser gesichert als in der Heiligen Schrift?" See also Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation, p. 51.

> You condemned those, who neglecting divine literature, spend their lifetime upon frivolous questions; and with what a trumpet-call you exhorted your audience to the study of Holy Scripture. A blessing on your sense and courage! Your aim is right. That is the way to the stars![2]

Erasmus was convinced of the importance of Bible study and devoted considerable effort to the improvement of the text and the translation of the Bible.[3] His endeavors involved him in a lengthy controversy over the rights of a translator and grammarian. It is well known that Erasmus published a Greek New Testament in 1516 based on the best manuscripts then available to him and that he revised it several times as new manuscripts came to his attention. But the controversy went back for over a decade. In a 1505 letter, Erasmus had commented on the need for the assistance of grammarians in biblical study and on the need for Jerome's text to be corrected.[1]

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[1] Christian Humanism, p. 73. Allen, II, 102: "Postremo si quid statuendum est, id velim reverenter non arroganter, et ex divinis litteris, non e commenticiis hominum ratiunculis statui."

[2] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 305. Allen, II, 278: "tua damnaris istos qui, neglectis divinis literis, anxiis ac frivolis questiunculis insenescunt, et qua tuba tuos auditores ad divinae Scripturae studia sis adhortatus. Macte animo virtuteque 'ballo houtos,' sic itur ad astro."

[3] In this chapter we are concerned only with the use of the Bible as an authority for religious questions. In the next chapter we shall deal with the use of the Bible as a manual of Christian piety and living.

Erasmus was opposed in his textual work by those who argued that the authority of a council was required before one could change the text of the Bible. Erasmus needed no help from a council to recognize that the text of the Vulgate was corrupt. As a grammarian, he was qualified to correct it. He defended his individual freedom as a scholar to restore the corrupt text without a council in much the same way that Luther defended his freedom as a theologian in matters of faith.[2] Erasmus considered it part of his scholarly task to correct the text where it was corrupt, indicating where he agreed or disagreed. He vowed to "emend it if it is distorted, articulate clearly if it is ambiguous, explain if it is obscure, change if it contains remarkably barbarous words."[3]

But even if the correct text and clearest possible translation of the Bible were achieved Erasmus suggested that one further step was necessary--reliance on the interpretation of the church Fathers. Erasmus and other humanists demonstrated their conviction about the wisdom of studying the Fathers to discover their interpretation of the Bible by spending much of their time preparing scholarly editions of the works of the Fathers for publication.[1]

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[1] The letter was to Christopher Fisher and the passage to be noted is in the Epistles of Erasmus, I, 382-383, and Allen, I, 410-411.

[2] See for example Allen, II, 322.

[3] Ibid., III, 313: "Imaginatur et ceu probatum assumit me publice corrigere ac mutare vulgatum aeditionem, cum ego ea relicta integra et intacta, quod est in Graecorum voluminibus Latine verterim, obiter indicans ubi nostra cum illis consentiat aut dissentiat; neque raro praeferens id quod est in nostris codicibus, emendans si quid depravatum, explanans si quid ambigue, enarrans si quid obscure, mutans si quid insigniter barbare dictum."

The obvious problem with the use of the church Fathers in interpreting the Scripture is how to decide which one to follow or what to do when they disagree--a problem which does not arise within the Catholic understanding of tradition.[2] Melanchthon suggested that when the Fathers disagreed among themselves the Scripture was to be believed.[1] In 1521 he denied that the Scripture was ever so unclear as to require a tradition to understand it. Those obscure passages which were in the Bible could be explained by reference to other passages without turning to outside help.[2]

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[1] Erasmus is the best example of this kind of endeavor. He was with the printer Froben in Basel from 1521-1529 working on editions of the Fathers. His editing included Arnobius in 1522, Hilary in 1523, Jerome in 1524, Iranaeus in 1526, Ambrose in 1527, Augustine in 1528-1529, and a Latin translation of Chrysostom in 1530. See Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation, pp. 154-155. See also Denys Gorce, "La patristique dans la réforme d'Érasme," in Festgabe Joseph Lortz, edited by Erwin Iserloh and Peter Manns (2 vols.; Baden-Baden, 1958), I, 233-276. For more discussion of the work of Erasmus on the Fathers see Percy Stafford Allen, "Erasmus' Services to Learning," Proceedings of the British Academy, XI (1924-1925), 360-365. Melanchthon's use of the Fathers has been investigated by Peter Fraenkel, Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon (Paris, 1961). According to Fraenkel, Melanchthon found a kind of doctrinal succession in the Fathers which he used "against the Roman theologians' emphasis on the authority of the contemporary Church" (p. 251). Fraenkel explains Melanchthon's view of "doctrinal continuity" in his "Revelation and Tradition. Notes on Some Aspects of Doctrinal Continuity in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon," Studia Theologica, XIII (1959), 97-133.

[2] See Father Tavard's case for the Catholic view that Bible and tradition are not conflicting streams of information: "the authority of the church's tradition and that of Scripture are not two, but one" (Holy Writ or Holy Church, p. 244).

c. Old theology, not new doctrine. The two sources to which the humanists recalled the church were _bonae litterae_ and the Bible. However, the call of _ad fontes_ was also raised with respect to theology. Melanchthon illustrated this when he contrasted the old theology of Christ with the new Aristotelian doctrine.[3] In _Loci Communes_ he drew a parallel between the dangers faced by the church of his day and the church at the time of its founding: "For just as in these latter times the church has embraced Aristotle in preference to Christ, so immediately after the inception of the church, Christian doctrine was weakened through the fusion of Platonic philosophy."[4] Melanchthon sought to recall Christian doctrine into the light which the "impious pontifical constitutions and the trifling disputations of the sophists had nearly extinguished."[1] Human traditions had been so misused as to obscure the grace of Christ.[2] This somewhat conflicted with his view that the traditions of the church could have their own authority but should be subject to the judgment of Christ.[3] Melanchthon proclaimed the freedom of the Christian from the captivity of the philosophers and human traditions--what he called the second Babylonian captivity.[4] The scholastics were accused of obscuring the Scriptures with the result that confusion reigned concerning the meaning of vital parts of the Christian faith:

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[1] _Werke_, I, 19.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 146: "Proinde dabitis mihi certam esse scripturae sententiam ac perspicuam, ita ut ipsa, si quis alicubi locus est obscurior, sese exponat . . . ."

[3] _Ibid._, p. 5.

[4] Philip Melanchthon, _Loci Communes_, translated by Charles Leander (Boston, 1944), p. 70. _Werke_, II/1, 8-9: "Nam perinde atque his posterioribus ecclesiae temporibus Aristotelem pro Christo sumus amplexi, ita statim post ecclesiae auspicia per Platonicam philosophiam Christiana doctrina labefactata est." Cf. _Werke_, I, 77-78.

> After all things in Scripture began to be referred to external works, then all Scripture at once was obscured, and it was not known what was sin, what grace, what law, what gospel, what Moses and what Christ. This darkness, greater even than the Egyptian darkness, we owe to that impious and execrable philosophy of the Scholastic

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1. Werke, I, 63: "qui Christianam doctrinam impiis pontificum constitutionibus et nugacibus scholarum sophismatis prope extinctam in lucem revocavit."

2. Loci Communes, p. 68. Werke, II/1, 6-7: "Et dissimulari eorum stultitia posset, nisi evangelium interim et beneficia Christi obscurassent nobis illae stultae disputationes." Cf. Werke, I, 69, where he argued that the traditions of impious men had obscured Christ for four hundred years.

3. Werke, I, 47.

4. Ibid., I, 87: "Hic vestram fidem, vestram pietatem implorat Ecclesia, ut hactenus philosophiae et humanarum traditionum captivam vel tandem ab hac tam misera et bis babylonica servitute adseratis."

theologasters.[1]

The truth of the matter was, according to Melanchthon, that the new doctrines of the scholastics and the philosophers were condemned by the Scripture.[2]

Loyalists like Cajetan and Eck found fault with this kind of an attitude toward the theological tradition of the church. They criticized Luther for thinking that he could accept or reject whatever he desired out of the theological tradition of the church. Such individual decisions were sure to lead the church astray.[3] The church itself would teach the believer true Christian theology; it was not as if the theological tradition of the church were a cafeteria line from which the individual could make his personal choices.

d. Revival of learning and scholarship. For those who suggested a return ad fontes, mainly humanists and university men, a significant part of their program for ecclesiastical reform was a revival of learning and scholarship by raising them to the level of antiquity. In their minds, one result of this renewal of learning and scholarship would be the reform of the church,[1] though they did not always make that relationship explicitly clear. This revival of learning and scholarship was necessary in order that the sources might be recovered.

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[1] Loci Communes, pp. 109-110. Werke, II/1, 40: "Posteaquam omnia in scripturis ad externa opera referri coeperunt, semel universa scriptura obscurata est nec intellectum, quid peccatum, quid gratia, quid lex, quid evangelium, quid Moses, quid Christus. Et has tenebras plus quam Aegyptias debemus impiae isti et execrabili scholasticorum theologastrorum philosophiae."

[2] Werke, I, 34, 95.

[3] See for example Eck, Gegen Martin Luthers Anklage wider das Konzil von Konstanz, p. 6: "Waser vormessenheyt das sey, kan eyn yetzlicher vorstendiger wol abnemen, seynen verstandt so vil heyligen und der christlichen kirchen furtzusetzen."

Erasmus sometimes left the impression that the love of learning would solve most of the problems facing the church. In the Enchiridion he encouraged the use of good scholarship in understanding both Christ and the Scriptures:

> But if you thirst for scholarship so that with its help you may more clearly understand the Christ permeating the mysteries of Scripture and may love Him when you understand Him and share or enjoy Him when you have thus loved and understood Him--in that case, apply yourself to the acquisition of learning, but not beyond the point where you think it will contribute to that sound understanding.[2]

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[1] Rudolf Agricola, whom Spitz calls the Father of German humanism, was perhaps the major inspriation for the reform program of the humanists: the desire for a renewal of learning in Germany and thereby of religious thought and life. See Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 20, 24-25. Though humanists like Erasmus, Celtis, Agricola, and Wimpfeling gave clearest expression to this view, it was also present among churchmen. For example, Cajetan saw study and evangelism as two methods by which his order could be reformed. See Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica, IX, 125.

[2] Enchiridion, p. 96. In "Erasmus on Learning," in Historical Studies Presented to Marion Dargan, edited by William M. Dabney and Josiah C. Russell ("University of New Mexico Publications in History," vol. IV; Albuquerque, 1952), John E. Longhurst discusses Erasmus' awareness of the new anti-learning spirit of his day. Erasmus "reflects his concern not only with the concept that piety diminishes as learning increases but also with the notion that learning is useless unless it has a functional value of the most practical kind" (p. 19).

In his inaugural address at the university of Ingolstadt, Celtis appealed to the refining process of the pursuit of learning and its noble goals which separated the cultured from the common man.[1] Here again, a difference in attitude between Erasmus and Celtis is apparent. Both advocated a love of learning and scholarship, but for different reasons: Erasmus to understand Christ, Celtis to discover the true nobility of the human spirit.

Although love of learning was the basic inspiration behind German humanism, it would be mistaken to assume that the main purpose behind the humanists' revival of learning and scholarship was to reform the church. The basic goal of the humanists was the improvement of learning and scholarship, and it was to that purpose that they invested their time and considerable talents. At heart they were university men, and not churchmen. They preferred to function as teachers and not priests, scholars and not ecclesiastics.

Because they wanted to return to the sources in the original languages, the humanists were required to encourage the study of the scholarly languages: Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Latin had a long history as the language of education and the church, but the humanists proposed to improve its use by emulating the style of the ancients.[1] The study of Greek was spreading, but the language of the New Testament was still relatively unknown, even to many educated people. The impetus to the study of Hebrew had come from Reuchlin, and the controversy that followed shook the church in the years just before the Reformation.[2] Reuchlin was at first aloof, and later hostile, to the Reformation; but both Luther and Melanchthon expressed their appreciation of his contribution to language study which they felt had aided their reforming efforts.[3] Renewed interest in the Cabbala had also led some to the study of the Hebrew language.[4]

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[1] "I exhort you to devote yourselves first of all to those studies which will render your minds more refined and cultured and summon you away from the way of the common herd to give yourselves over to higher pursuits. Hold before your eyes the true nobility of spirit remembering that you bring not credit but dishonor to our empire if you neglect the study of letters in favor of raising horses and dogs and seeking ecclesiastical prebends . . . ." Quoted by Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p. 27.

The study of the ancient and holy languages was a vital part of the humanists' prescription for society. Celtis couched it in terms of the honor that would come to the student of the languages: "Oh then! Learn the three sacred languages, which will bring you much honour; along with the Hebrew and the Latin tongues the writings of the famous

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[1] This was sometimes carried to ridiculous lengths. Some purists would, for example, use only those words found in the works of Cicero and only in the cases in which he used them. It was this kind of mechanical reproduction that Erasmus opposed.

[2] For several good articles on the significance of Reuchlin, see the Reuchlin: Festgabe. Edited by Manfred Krebs. See also Lewis W. Spitz, "Reuchlin's Philosophy." The most recent biographical study is by Max Brod, Johannes Reuchlin und sein Kampf: Eine historische Monographie (Berlin, 1965).

[3] Spitz, "Reuchlin's Philosophy," p. 16.

[4] On the Cabbala see J. Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (New York, 1944).

Athenians."[1] Otto Herding said of Wimpfeling that he felt there was no other way to reach such heights than the languages of antiquity.[2] Nikolaus Ellenbog stressed the value of the study of these languages and, in particular, the benefits that would accrue to the church.[3]

Erasmus placed importance on the study of Greek, and his 1516 edition of the New Testament in Greek was an epochal work. He felt that without a knowledge of Greek only a feeble effort could be made toward the study of literature and theology. In 1515 he wrote a letter to Martin Dorp stating his position quite persuasively:

> Therefore, dear Martin, out of my good will toward you, I will not stop encouraging you, as I have done before, at least to add the knowledge of Greek letters to your studies. You have been exceptionally blessed in your talent; and your compact, bold, fluent, and luxuriant style gives evidence of not only a sound mind but also a prolific one. There is not only a full life ahead of you but one that is vigorous and productive as well. You have already completed the common course of studies with distinction. Believe me, if you add the summit of Greek letters to your very distinguished undertakings, I would dare to predict both to myself and others a great future for you and accomplishments not as yet equaled by any of the modern theologians . . . . But if, as matters now stand, you promise yourself a true understanding of theology without a knowledge of languages and especially of that language in which the majority of the Divine Writings have been handed down,

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[1] Selections, pp. 30-31: "Perge tres sacras modo nosse linguas,/Quae tibi magnum tribuent honorem,/Cum Palestina Latioque claro Cecrope scriptam."

[2] "Probleme des frühen Humanismus in Deutschland," Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, XXXVIII (1956), 349.

[3] Nikolaus Ellenbog Briefwechsel ("Corpus Catholicorum," vols. XIX-XXI; Münster, 1938), pp. 27-29, 31-32, 83.

> you have strayed far off the path . . . . But if you do not agree now, I am afraid that when you are older and more experienced, you will approve my suggestion and condemn your own opinion. Then, as often happens, you will see your mistake when it is too late to correct it. I would be able to name for you a great number of men who, already gray-haired oldsters, were rejuvenated in the study of Greek, since they finally realized that without Greek the study of letters was feeble and groping.[1]

Thus the study of the scholarly languages was basic to the program of the humanists for reviving learning and improving conditions within the church.

The emphasis of the humanists on learning and scholarship had its practical application in their theory of education. In attempting to characterize the humanists, Myron Gilmore has suggested that their essential program was reform through education.[2] Erasmus and Wimpfeling illustrate particularly well the educational theories of the humanists.

R. R. Bolgar has asserted that because of his importance in the ideal of a liberal education Erasmus "is the greatest man we come across in the history of education."[1] Though that may be something of an exaggeration, it is true that Erasmus wrote impressively on the principles and methods of liberal education.[2] Craig R. Thompson places the opinions of Erasmus on education in their proper Christian and religious context: "Erasmus shared the conviction of Christian scholars that the character of education is ultimately religious and, indeed, Christian."[3] Thus Erasmus was interested in education not only for its own sake but also because it was an important tool in the effort to improve the religious life of all people.

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[1] Christian Humanism, pp. 80-81. Allen, II, 106-107.

[2] The World of Humanism, p. 206: "Belief in the potentialities of educational reform was perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of this school of reformers, marking them off most clearly from those whose hopes were committed to more revolutionary and more mystical ways of activity. In the minds of many of the humanists a new program of education was not only necessary; it was all that was necessary." While this judgment may be accurate, it does not say much that is distinctive about sixteenth century humanism. The idea of reform through education has had a very long history and as Gilmore depicts the ideal of humanism it does not differ greatly from medieval models such as the Cathedral schools. Cf. Joachimsen, "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," pp. 476-480.

We have earlier noted that Erasmus urged the study of Greek because it was the language of the New Testament, but the study of Greek was important for an educational reason as well. It opened the door to the vast knowledge attained by the Greek culture at its height:

> For I affirm that with slight qualification the whole of attainable knowledge lies enclosed within the literary monuments of ancient Greece. This great inheritance I will compare to a limpid spring of whose undefiled waters it behooves all who truly thirst to drink and be restored."[4]

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1. The Classical Heritage, p. 336.

2. For a list of works by Erasmus on education, see Craig R. Thompson's introduction to Desiderius Erasmus concerning the Aim and Method of Education, edited and translated by William Harrison Woodward ("Classics in Education," vol. XIX; New York, 1904), pp. vii-viii. We have relied on two of the works translated by Woodward: De ratione studii and De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis libellus.

3. Ibid., p. ix.

4. Ibid., p. 164.

The failure to use this great source of knowledge was only a part of the severe criticisms Erasmus made of the education of his day. In his De Pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis, written in 1529 to the Duke of Cleves, Erasmus summarized his criticisms:

> We see boys kept at home in idleness and self-indulgence until they are fourteen or fifteen years of age. They are then sent to some school or other. There, if they are lucky, they gain some touch of Grammar, the simpler inflections, the agreement of noun and adjective. They are then supposed to "know" Latin, and are put on to some terrible text in Logic, which will spoil what little good Latin accidence or syntax they have acquired. My own childhood was tortured by logical subtleties which had no reference to anything that was true in fact or sound in expression. Further, as to the manner of teaching, what confused methods, what needless toil, characterized instruction! How common it was for a master, wise or foolish, but all equally out of place! All this made for needless difficulty; for there is no virtue in difficulty, as such, in instruction. And even today school-masters are not seldom men of no learning at all, or, what is worse, of no character. They have taken to teaching as a means to a life of ease and money-making. If this has been, and is, the true state of education in our schools, no wonder that learning perishes amongst us. The critical years of a boy's life are allowed to run to waste; he acquires the habit, which cannot be cured, of giving but a fraction of his time and thought to serious pursuits, the rest he squanders on vulgar pleasures.[1]

Erasmus suggested that education should begin at an early age and should be under a sympathetic, gentle, and wise teacher. Physical beating would not result in a liberal education, and even harsh language should be used sparingly lest it lose its effectiveness.[2] Though experience is a helpful teacher, it is not so valuable as a liberal education:

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[1] Erasmus, Concerning Education, pp. 220-221.

[2] Ibid., pp. 180, 203, 208.

> They err, therefore, who affirm that wisdom is won by handling affairs and by contact with life, without aid from the teaching of philosophy. A long and manifold experience is, beyond doubt, of great profit, but only to such as by the wisdom of learning have acquired an intelligent and informed judgment.[1]

Wimpfeling was similar to Erasmus at many points in his educational theory. It was Wimpfeling's opinion that the only hope for the church was to begin the process of reform with the youth.[2] The moral education of young people was a prerequisite to the reform of the church and the Christian religion.[3] Just as a young tree could be bent without breaking, so education could alter the character of a youth.[4] Wimpfeling contrasted the evil and good inclinations of youth and argued that a good teacher could make the difference as

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1. Erasmus, Concerning Education, p. 191.

2. Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 52. Joseph Knepper, Jakob Wimpfeling, p. 328, suggests that Wimpfeling's chief significance was that his life was dedicated to youth. He worked for them untiringly and no effort was too difficult, no sacrifice too great to maintain the high ideals of youth. For Wimpfeling's views on education, see his Adolescentia ("Opera Selecta," vol. I; München, 1965), and his Pädagogische Schriften, edited by Joseph Freundgen (Paderborn, 1892).

3. Wimpfeling, Adolescentia, p. 207: "Christianae religionis et ecclesiasticae reformatione plurimum interest pueros et adolescentes bene in moribus institui."

4. Ibid., pp. 207-208. In a lighter vein Sebastian Brant made a similar point: "O fool, I beg you, lend your ear,/Since youth has ready memory/The child can learn quite easily./A youthful shoot can well be bent,/But old shoots curved with such intent/Will very often snap or shatter" (Ship of Fools, p. 73. Narrenschiff, p. 9).

to which set of inclinations a youth would follow.[1] In Wimpfeling's mind, the heart of the problem facing the church and society was the neglect of the proper education of the youth. He believed that with true knowledge and good teaching evil might be eradicated.[2]

In Wimpfeling's educational theory the character of the teacher could make the difference in the outcome of the students. Many young students had fallen into disgrace because their teachers had led them astray.[3] In a lengthy passage Wimpfeling described the qualities of a good teacher. The teacher should be gentle and friendly in his words. He should be free from anger, bitterness, and hatred, punishing no one in an expression of temper. He should love his students as a father, while avoiding the kind of love which leads to weakness and dependence. He should be lively and fresh, and willing to respond to questions. He should watch for faults and moral failures among the students while offering a good example in his own life.[4]

Reform by education played an important role in the program of the humanists for the correction of the ills of the church as we have seen in the works of Wimpfeling and Erasmus. But it was only a small part of the over-all goal of the humanists to return to the sources. The humanists we have considered seemed to have believed that if the noble sources of antiquity were made available to the people, the ideals found therein would be widely imitated. Their approach to the problems of the church was perhaps ineffective and unrealistic.

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[1] Adolescentia, pp. 195-197.

[2] Spitz concludes that Wimpfeling had a "naive Socratic view" (Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 51).

[3] Wimpfeling, Pädagogische Schriften, p. 166.

[4] Ibid., pp. 165-166. For more of Wimpfeling's encouragement to follow the example of a good teacher see ALF, p. 201: "Illius igitur optimi circumspectissimique praeceptoris vestri iussa capessite: ab eius humili & casta conversatione vobis exemplum futurae vitae desumite, pudicis & modestis coetaneis vos coniungite."

2. Churchmen. To this point the discussion of the call to return ad fontes has centered mainly on the humanists whose program involved the literature of antiquity and the major Christian source, the Bible. There were others who emphasized only the use of the Bible as the major source or standard for reform to which the church should return. Such clergymen or reformers as Philip Melanchthon, John Geiler, Giles of Viterbo, Berthold Pürstinger, Thomas Murner, and Cardinal Cajetan all used the Scripture in deciding questions of reform.

As we shall see, the ways in which they used the Bible varied greatly. However, the number of those who remained loyal to the church and also relied to a significant degree on the Scripture makes untenable the simple explanation that the Reformers followed the Bible and the Catholics followed ecclesiastical tradition. As Luther was to learn in his controversies with Eck and Cajetan over papal authority, his opponents could also quote the Bible to support their arguments.[1]

a. Use of Bible in church reform. How then was it proposed that the Bible be used as a source for ecclesiastical reform? It could be used as a means to return to the purity of the primitive church. The Scripture revealed conditions and practices in the New Testament church which should be taken as a pattern for the contemporary church.[2] Thus the situation of the primitive church was idealized and offered as a standard for reform.

Philip Melanchthon illustrated what can perhaps be called the basic Protestant attitude toward the use of the Scripture. All questions concerning articles of faith should be decided by reference to the Bible. In his "Baccalaureate Theses" delivered in September 1519, he wrote: "It is not necessary for a Catholic to believe any other articles of faith than those to which Scripture is a witness."[1] In Melanchthon's opinion, priorities had been confused by those who opposed the evangelical doctrine. Instead of using Scripture as a guide for the church, they elevated the church to a position so that it alone knew what the Scripture taught. Thus the church replaced the Bible in the dominant role.[2]

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[1] See the text of the debate at Leipzig in Seitz, LD. For Cajetan's line of argument see especially Thomas de Vio Cajetanus, De divina institutione pontificatus Romani Pontificis, edited by Friedrich Lauchert ("Corpus Catholicorum," vol. X; Münster, 1925). Hereafter cited as RP.

[2] In his Onus ecclesiae Pürstinger longed for a return to the practice of the "primitiva ecclesia" (p. 65). In his address at the Lateran Council Giles of Viterbo called back the "collapsed religion" to its "natural splendor." See his "Oratio prima synodi Lateranensis" in Mansi's Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, XXXII, 669: "ac denique collapsam religionem in veterem puritatem, in antiquam lucem, in nativum splendorem atque in suos fontes revocandi." In a letter on reform written as prior general of the Augustinian order Giles said: "We are not being innovators, but are simply trying in accordance with the will of God, to bring back to life those ancient laws whose observance has lapsed," quoted by John W. O'Malley, "Giles of Viterbo: A Reformer's Thought on Renaissance Rome," Renaissance Quarterly, XX (1967), 4. According to Clyde L. Manschrek, this attitude is also present in Melanchthon. See his biography Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer (New York, 1958), p. 50.

Those who were and remained loyal members of the Catholic church used the Bible, but they did not make it their only source of authority.[3] John Geiler, for example, called the harmony of the Scriptures a pillar of the faith.[4] He described the Bible as the Christian's map showing the way to heaven. In it God taught the Christian what he must believe and do to attain eternal life. It was a map which everyone should read.[1] Geiler also used the Bible as a kind of textbook for morality. The Bible revealed the divine law which was the pattern to be followed in the Christian life.[2]

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[1] Selected Writings, p. 18. Cf. Werke, I, 24: "Catholicum praeter articulos, quorum testis est scriptura, non est necesse alios credere." Cf. II/1, 56: "De fide non habent ius neque pontifices neque concilia neque universa ecclesia quidquam mutandi aut statuendi, sed simpliciter ad praescriptum sacrarum literarum exigendi sunt articuli fide." See Robert Stupperich, Melanchthon, translated by Robert Fischer (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 36-43, 45-46, 90-91, for a discussion of Melanchthon's views on the Bible.

[2] In 1521 Melanchthon advised that Luther would submit only to that church which followed the judgment of the Scripture: "Audit Ecclesiam, sed eam quae verbum dei profitetur, illius se iudicio subiicit, quae nihil non exigit ad verbum dei, quae iudicium sacrarum literarum non Sorbonicorum somniorum sequitur" (Werke, I, 155).

[3] The next section of this chapter will discuss how they also appealed for obedience to ecclesiastical authority and the teaching of the church.

[4] AS, II, 34.

Cajetan, Eck, and Murner, all loyal Catholics, used the Bible time and again to support their argument for obedience to papal authority. Peter and his successors had been given the keys of the kingdom and told to feed the sheep. Any attempt to deny papal authority, which was based on divine institution, erred in that it did not take the Bible in its obvious and literal meaning.[3] In his endeavor to reform his own order, Cajetan advocated the study of Sacred Scripture because it would illumine, kindle, and redeem souls.[1]

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[1] AS, III, 187: "Unsere Karte auf dem Wege zum Himmel ist in erster Linie die heilige Schrift des alten und neuen Testamentes, worin Gott der Herr uns lehrt, was wir glauben and thun müssen, um zum ewigen Leben zu gelangen. In zweiter Linie ist diese Karte das Bildwerk in unseren Kirchen, die Bilderbibel, in welcher jedermann lesen kann, was die heilige Schrift in Worten enthält und was die Heiligen Gottes gethan und gebitten haben."

[2] This kind of approach is abundant in the works of Geiler. See the selection from a pamphlet of 1513 printed by Hasak in Der christliche Glaube des deutschen Volkes beim Schlusse des Mittelalters (Regensburg, 1868), pp. 423-427, which interprets the Word of God as his rules, law, or commands. Cajetan believed that one duty of the prior was to offer instruction in the morals of the Scripture: "ita instructus saltem in moralibus divinae scripturae . . . ." (Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica, IX, 101).

[3] Cajetan, RP, pp. 3-15. Thomas Murner, ADN, p. 27. The Biblical authority was Matthew 16: 18-19 and John 21: 15-17. The Reformers seemed to be hardpressed to answer these arguments. Melanchthon sought to identify the "rock" as Peter's faith. See Melanchthon, Werke, I, 19-20, 105-108, and Luther in Seitz, LD, p. 78.

b. Interpretation of the Bible. The Bible was used on both sides of the Reformation debate. The issue became not whether the Bible should be used as an authority for reform but, granting its use, how it should be interpreted. Some loyalists felt that the enemies of the church tried to twist the clear meaning of Scripture by interpreting it to their advantage.[2] Cajetan, for one, argued for the literal meaning of Scripture, particularly in his interpretation of those passages upon which papal authority was based. He denied that the church imposed its sense upon the Scripture, but was convinced that the traditional interpretation of the church did conform to the obvious and literal sense of the Bible.[3] Geiler agreed with those humanists who argued that in difficult passages the interpretation of the Fathers should be followed and accepted over individual opinion.[1]

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[1] Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica, IX, 124: "In rerum communitate religionis nervus consistit, sacrarum litterarum studium proximorum animos illustrat, accendit, salvat." He further proposed that to be elected prior one must avoid poor Latin style and be able to relate the word of God to the monks: "nullus eligatur aut confirmetur in priorem, nisi sciens grammatice loqui absque falsa latinitate . . . . ut sciat competenter proponere verbum dei in dicta conventu" (ibid., p. 101).

[2] See for example Pürstinger in Onus ecclesiae, pp. 19-20, 50. Geiler described the "Verfälscher" of Holy Scripture and criticized those who tried to follow their own sense in interpreting the Bible (AS, II, 279-280).

[3] See J.D.M. Maes, "Le pouvoir pontifical d'après Cajétan," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, XII (1935), 705-721.

We can see, perhaps in a way that those in the sixteenth century could not, that use of the Bible as the source or authority for reform does not resolve the issue. There was more involved than what was a nearly unanimous decision to use the Bible in reformatory concerns. Perhaps the line can be drawn between a sola scriptura of the major Reformers and the position on the coherence of Scripture and tradition taken at the Council of Trent.[2] But it is questionable whether the Catholics under discussion in our time period would have accepted such a demarcation of the respective positions.

With the exception of Melanchthon, the churchmen we have considered remained loyal to the church. They made full use of the Bible, but not the Bible alone. What seemed to be implicit in the writings of Catholic controversialists like Cajetan and Eck was the charge that the Reformers themselves did not follow sola scriptura. Rather, they followed their own individual interpretations of the Scripture. Those involved in the controversy came to an impasse when the objective, literal, obvious, and simple interpretation of the Bible on the one side met its counterpart on the other. At that point the division of the church was a fact. The issue was not whether the Bible was the proper authority for reform, but who was to decide what the Bible really meant. The Catholics preferred the interpretation of the church over private opinions of individuals. A second distinction might be drawn between those who used the Bible as the source for the faith of a Christian (Melanchthon) and those who used the Bible as a pattern or rule-book for behavior (Geiler).

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[1] AS, II, 280: "Die hh. Väter haben sie in demselben Geiste, der sie auch geschrieben hat, in ihrem viersachen Sinne ausgelegt: historisch, allegorisch, tropologisch und anagogisch. Ihnen müssen wir im Verständnis der heiligen Schrift folgen, nicht unserm eigenen Sinne."

[2] As Father Tavard suggests in Holy Writ or Holy Church.

D. Obedience to Ecclesiastical Authority

In the material surveyed thus far, we have noted those who sought to find the standard for reform in the written documents of the past. The literature of antiquity and the Bible were the two sources usually mentioned. Obedience to ecclesiastical authority was another method of reform that was proposed. The church, it was argued, had been given divine authority that should call forth obedience. The authority of the church was invested in the pope, the councils, and in the continuing tradition of its teaching.

1. Authority of the church founded in the papacy. Obedience to the authority of the church was originally founded in the papacy. Defenders of papal authority argued that the papacy was instituted by Christ when he gave the

supreme power in the church to Peter.[1] The scriptural authority was Christ's giving the keys of the kingdom to Peter (Matthew 16) and instructing him to feed the sheep (John 21).[2] It was argued that in both cases the recipient was Peter (not all the disciples) and thus he was commissioned "pontificatum totius ecclesie." The Reformers, of course, did not find this line of argument persuasive.[3]

But a way had to be found to move from the authority of Peter to the authority of the contemporary popes. This was accomplished by arguing that papal authority was based on apostolic succession. Cajetan attempted to prove that the Roman pontiffs were the legitimate successors of Peter and thus "pontificatum totius ecclesie" who ought to be obeyed.[1] The keys were given to Peter and the future pastors of the total church.[2] The continuing succession of Roman pontiffs from Peter to the present was guaranteed by the holy authorities of antiquity and the councils.[3] According to Eck, the authority of Christ was responsible not only for the original institution, but for the succession as well.[4] Cajetan considered those who denied apostolic succession to be heretics or schismatics, and not true Christians.[5]

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[1] See, for example, Eck's argument in Seitz, LD, p. 80: "privatum ecclesiae Romanae esse de iure divino et constitutione Christi . . . ." Cf. Cajetan, RP, p. 80: "verus est pontifex ecclesie catholice a Christo in beato Petro institutus," or his De comparatione: "Papa habet supremam potestatem in Ecclesia Dei. Fundaturque super institutione Jesu Christi . . . ." Quoted by Gerhard Hennig, Cajetan und Luther ("Arbeiten zur Theologie," vol. II, 7: Stuttgart, 1966), p. 14. Cajetan argued for the superiority of the pope in a speech before the Lateran Council. A partial text of the speech is "Oratio reverendi patris, fratris Thoma de Vio Cajetani, sacrae theologiae professoris, ac totius ordinis praedicatorum generalis magistri" in Mansi's Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, XXXII, 719-727. On Murner, see Waldemar Kawerau, Thomas Murner und die Kirche des Mittelalters ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. XXX; Halle, 1890), p. 22.

[2] For Cajetan's full discussion of these passages, see RP, pp. 3-15, 25-31, 54-66. Murner urged constancy in the faith based on the power of the keys given to Peter: "Ich sag auch weiter daz solche bestetigung des glaubens in krafft der schlüssel des himmelreichs sant Peter gegeben seint, und ist auch nit war das die schlüssel des reichs der himmel der gemein geben seient, dan es stat geschribben, Petre dir wil ich geben" (ADN, p. 27).

[3] Luther's and Melanchthon's responses to this argument have been noted earlier. In a 1520 pamphlet Carlstadt reacted to what he considered to be the Catholic overemphasis on the power of the pope: "Die Monchen sprechen was der bapst thut ist wol gethan unser heyligster vatter der Bapst kan nicht sundigen nicht yrren und ist ubir alle konige un furste un hat heylige geschrifft in seiner macht," Von bepstlicher Heylickeit . . . (Wittenberg, 1520), Aii recto.

At the Leipzig Disputation one point at issue between Eck and Luther was whether or not the church should be considered as a monarchy. Eck conceived of the church as a monarchy with the pope as ruler. Luther accepted the principle of ecclesiastical hierarchy but rejected the kingship of the pope.[6] This issue was important in the Reformation because of the corollary to papal supremacy put forward by the Catholics. Papal supremacy and authority was important to Rome because the pope as supreme monarch instituted by Christ kept the church from error.[1] Since it was thus guaranteed that the church could not fall into error, and individuals certainly could, obedience to ecclesiastical authority was better than individual decisions.

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[1] RP, pp. 66-88.

[2] Ibid., p. 15.

[3] See ibid., pp. 88-100, for the numerous authorities Cajetan cited to support his position.

[4] Seitz, LD, p. 80.

[5] RP, pp. 66, 99.

[6] See Seitz, LD, pp. 56, 59, 80. Hennig argues that the ruling principle for Cajetan was the papacy and for Luther it was the Word (Cajetan und Luther, p. 73).

2. Authority of the church demands obedience. The pope guaranteed the truth and authority of the church and thus the church should be obeyed. This call for obedience had its practical application in the conviction that reform could best be effected by the leaders of the church assuming their proper responsibilities and by individual Christians obediently following their leadership.

The feeling that the problems of the church could best be solved by ecclesiastical obedience is implied in the evidence that suggests that Cajetan went as papal legate to the Diet of Augsburg to obtain by conciliation the submission of Martin Luther, considered to be a slightly bothersome, rebellious monk.[2] It was assumed by the church that a call for obedience would quickly resolve this minor controversy. Obedience was considered to be necessary for the proper functioning of the church, and the works of Eck and Geiler were full of descriptions of obedience as the highest virtue.[1]

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[1] See Cajetan's denial of error in the church in De comparatione: "falsum et erroneum est dicere quod Papa possit errare, quia hoc esset dicere quod Ecclesia tota potest errare in fide, quia ad ipsum pertinet determinare de fide" (quoted by Hennig, Cajetan und Luther, p. 26). Cf. RP, p. 83.

[2] This is suggested by Jean Riviere, "Cajétan défenseur de la papauté contre Luther," Revue Thomiste, XXXIX (1934-1935), 246.

Geiler discussed ecclesiastical obedience in two different ways. First, it meant obedience to the commands of the church as well as the commands of God.[2] Secondly, it meant to believe what the church instructed the Christian to believe. Geiler put it briefly: "I believe what the holy, catholic Church believes. I am a Christian. I am a

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[1] In Gegen Martin Luthers Anklage wider das Konzil von Konstanz, pp. 10-11, Eck charged Luther with rejecting obedience and leading others to obstinancy: "Darztu stell ich in euch, das er die höchsten tugent der gehorsamen also verwyrfft, das er uns alle widerspennig wil machen und ungehorsam dem babst und andern geistlicher öberkeit und den babst mit ungehörten lesterworten schmecht ein wolff, ein dieb, ein rauber, eyn endtchrist nennet, der doch seiner person halben (als vil man hie auff erden ein münichen erkennen kan) ein frummer herre ist unnd bessers lebens dan Ludder." Against Carlstadt Eck argued that he did not want to be a "legalist" but "obedientia superioribus debita exhibere . . . ." in Defensio contra amarulentas D. Andreae Bodenstein Carolstatini Invectiones ("Corpus Catholicorum," vol. I; Münster, 1919), p. 24. Cf. Geiler, AS, III, 304-305: "Die erste Magd ist der Gehorsam. Der Gehorsam macht alle Handlungen rein und fein, und eine Ordensperson lebt gerade wegen des vollkommenen Gehorsams reiner, als andere." For Geiler, the yoke of Christ which the Christian was called upon to bear was most perfectly expressed in poverty, chastity, and obedience (AS, III, 321).

[2] AS, III, 161; IV, 257. In his mind equating the commands of God and the commands of the church presented no difficulty. They were equally authoritative and equally binding. He did not provide any way to resolve the difficulty when they appeared to be in conflict, and thus his call to obey ecclesiastical authority could offer no real help to a potential reformer who believed some of the commandments of the church were opposed to the commands of God.

Catholic."[1]

Obedience to the church was supported by two basic arguments. First, there was only one true church which must be believed and obeyed.[2] Emser picturesquely compared the folly of the individual struggling against the church to a gnat fighting an elephant.[3] Bishop Pürstinger found unity in the one faith, one death of God, and one church.[4] Secondly, the church was to be obeyed and believed because Christ had established it and served as its head. The authority of the church ultimately came from Christ alone.[1]

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[1] *AS*, IV, 163; or III, 40, 111. Such belief in what the church taught was a part of the German theological tradition. In his pamphlet *Der ewigen Wiszeit betbüchlin* (reprinted in Basel in 1518) Heinrich Suso had advocated such a position: "Zu dem ersten mit gantzen glauben, also das er an die heiligen kirchen gelaube, und iren gebotten gehorsam sy, und an kein ding gelauben das dye heilig kirchen verwürffet" (selection in Hasak, *Der christliche Glaube*, p. 542). For Stephen Fridolin, a late fifteenth century Franciscan preacher, certainty for the individual believer comes when he binds himself to the Catholic church, the sure bearer of the tradition: "Wenn du hältst und glaubst, was diese heilige christliche Kirche hält und glaubt, so magst du nicht fehlen." Quoted by P. Ulrich Schmidt, *P. Stephan Fridolin, Ein Franziskanerprediger des ausgehenden Mittelalters* (München, 1911), p. 63. At the Leipzig Disputation Eck saw his task as defending the truth of the church's approved decrees and not debating the question of indulgences (Seitz, *LD*, p. 171).

[2] Cajetan, *RP*, p. 49.

[3] Emser, *De disputatione Lipsicensi*, p. 31: "Atque his ducibus et aurigis contra invincibilem ecclesiae veritatem, tot martyrum caedibus, tam solidis apostolorum fundamentis, supra firmissimam Christi petram edificatam, tanquam musca contra elephantum aut adversus aquilam scarabaeus velitari ausit?"

[4] *Tewtsche Theologey*, edited by Wolfgang Reithmeier (München, 1852), p. 49.

3. Responsible leadership as a method of church reform. Related to this call for obedience to ecclesiastical authority was the conviction that responsible leadership was all that was needed to bring about the necessary reform of the church. No radical or revolutionary solution was required. The church had within its own resources the means to bring about reform. A reform through existing channels with little disruption or disturbance was the hope of many people. It is obvious that those clergymen in the early sixteenth century who were loyal to the church and the pope would agree that whatever reform of the church was necessary could be done through existing channels by responsible leadership. We shall not summarize their position again, but rather turn our attention to two of the humanists, Erasmus and Wimpfeling, who publicly advocated this kind of reform.

Within the church the person from whom responsible leadership was most needed was the pope. Erasmus conceived of the ideal pope as the true vicar of Christ, protector of the faith, dispensor of the true power according to the sources of the evangelical philosophy.[2]

Wimpfeling took an even stronger stand than did

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[1] See, for example, Cajetan, RP, p. 81: ". . . nam quia secundum veritatem apostolica tam sedes quam authoritas a solo Christo est et esse potest, a quo solo possunt apostoli fieri . . . ." Cf. Fürstinger, Tewtsche Theologey, p. 634, and Emser, De disputatione Lipsicensi, p. 81.

[2] Allen, IV, 104, 117, 440.

Erasmus on the responsibility of the pope for reform. He offered nothing that was essentially new in the way of a solution to the problem of abuses. He advocated a papal solution, reform from the top, an idea not greatly different from the fifteenth century conciliarists.[1] The task of the pope was to protect the Christian faith.[2] The pope was responsible for improving the situation so that the gospel of Christ might be sincerely proclaimed, all errors and blasphemies might be erased, and all vices and immorality might be removed.[3]

For Wimpfeling, the pope was the ultimate power upon whose activity the salvation of the whole church depended.[4] He wrote to the pope: "You alone are the hope of our solid foundations, you are the good shepherd who takes as his burden the care of souls. We desire to serve Christ under the

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1. Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 54. See Knod, "Neun Brief von und an Jakob Wimpfeling," letters 5 and 9. Similar suggestions for a papal-led reform of a papal-led church were made by Cajetan and Giles. See Hennig, Cajetan und Luther, p. 34, and Francis X. Martin, "The Registers of Giles of Viterbo: A Source on the Reform before the Reformation, 1506-1518," Augustiniana, XII (1962), 157.

2. Wimpfeling, ALF, p. 383: ". . . Romanae sedis qua Christi fideles protegantur . . . ."

3. Ibid., pp. 523-524: "Hoc enim (si Aeneae creditur) papam decet curare ut evangelium Christi (quod est optimum animae pabulum) omnibus sincere praedicetur, ut omnes errores, omnis blasphemia eradicetur, ut bella sopiantur, ut furta, rapinae, incendia, homocidia, adulteria, ebrietates, crapulae, contentiones, odio & rixas e medio tollantur."

4. Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 54.

protection of your wings."[1]

Under ideal conditions there would have been wisdom in the emphasis Erasmus and Wimpfeling placed on the papacy as a viable agent of reform. However, as later developments seem to demonstrate, the conditions were less than ideal and the papacy did not become the kind of decisive agent of reform that many people felt was needed. Had the papacy been willing and able to follow the ideal which Erasmus, Wimpfeling, and others proposed, the next years might not have had such disastrous effects on Christian unity.

Theologians, bishops, and clergy were also called upon to exercise responsible leadership leading to the improvement of society and the reform of the church. Theology should come from gospel sources. The failure of the scholastics was that they lost sight of the gospel.[2] Erasmus urged his fellow-humanist Justus Jonas to turn to the theology of the gospel, not the theology of the scholastics and the false preaching of the monks who preached man, not Christ.[3] The duty of the Christian theologian had little to do with syllogisms and everything to do with the living of an angelic life.[1] Theologians, as teachers of the gospel, have as their first responsibility the winning of converts and the correcting of public morals.[2] Thus the theologians would have to play a major role in the reform of church and society by revealing the content of Christian theology and ethics.

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[1] ALF, p. 394: "Tu solum es spei nostrae anchora, tu bonas esto pastor, qui pro suis onibus animam ponat, sub umbra alarum tuarum Christo cupimus militare."

[2] Epistles of Erasmus, III, 404. Cf. Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, pp. 47-48.

[3] Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas, pp. 22-23.

The bishops and the clergy had as their major responsibility for the reform of the church the teaching and preaching of the gospel. Erasmus contrasted the worldliness and immorality of the bishops with their failure to fulfill their religious duties and to teach the people.[3] Wimpfeling listed four kinds of responsibilities which the bishops were not always meeting: (1) exercising judicial power, (2) conferring ordination and consecration, (3) publishing the word of God, (4) regulating and examining the activities of the clergy.[4]

According to Erasmus, the simple proclamation of the gospel was the obligation of both bishops and clergy. In 1516 he wrote to one of his correspondents: "I approve of your having adopted the practice of public preaching, and congratulate you on your success, especially as you teach Christ in simplicity, without any display of the subtleties of men."[1] Beatus Rhenanus revealed a similar attitude when he praised erudite sermons which restored good learning, corrected morals, and spoke seriously of sacred things.[2]

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[1] Erasmus, AW, p. 143: "Qua ratione intelligant angeli, fortasse subtilius disserat alius vel non Christianus, at illud persuadere, ut hic puri ab omnibus inquinamentis vitam exigamus angelicam, id demum Christiani theologi munus est."

[2] Allen, IV, 102: "Si se magnos theologos volunt ostendere, convertant Iudaeos, convertant ad Christum a Christo alienos, emendent publicos Christianorum mores; quibus nihil est corruptius, ne apud Turcas quidem."

[3] Education of a Christian Prince, p. 245.

[4] Wimpfeling's views are taken from a letter included in Knod's "Neun Briefe von und an Jakob Wimpfeling," p. 234.

Responsible leadership toward the reform of the church might also be present in the work of church councils; however, the call to reform the church by means of a council was not frequently mentioned during our period. One is tempted to suggest that most people were familiar with the failure of conciliar reform in the previous one hundred years and thus were pessimistic about its success in their day. There were few people who made their plan for ecclesiastical reform depend upon, or even include, a council. There was, of course, the Lateran Council meeting in the years prior to the Reformation, but our survey of German literature from 1510 to 1520 does not reveal much interest in that gathering.[3]

Some did advocate a church council as the only valid authority by which to reform the church. Of these, the one who gave the fullest expression and most optimistic evaluation

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1. Epistles of Erasmus, II, 332. Allen, II, 329: "Quod concionaris apud populum, probo tuum institutum; quod succedit, gratulor, praesertim cum Christum pure doceas, non hominum iactes aut ostentes argutias."

2. Der Briefwechsel, p. 185.

3. There were, for example, only three brief references to the council by Erasmus in his correspondence during our period (Allen, I, 498, 500, 502).

was Giles of Viterbo.[1] His argument for the necessity of councils was based on the conviction that faith was necessary to please God (Hebrews 11:6) and that faith could not persist without councils. Therefore, man cannot be saved without councils.[2] Just as the body must eat to live, so must the church have councils to reform itself.[3]

Throughout its history, the church had taken refuge in a council in times of trouble, and Giles argued that it should do so again.[4] Bishop Pürstinger referred to councils and emphasized that they should be governed by the Holy Spirit, but he did not use the theme of the earlier conciliarists, reform in head and members.[5] Thomas Murner, in his 1520 response to Luther, discussed the possibility of calling a council and some of the practical questions involved in doing so, but he seemed more interested in condemning Luther's disruptiveness and revolutionary approach than in outlining the positive efforts toward church reform that a council could attempt.[6] The sources of the period indicate that the endeavor to reform the church by a general council did not figure prominently in reform programs of the early sixteenth century.[1]

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[1] See his "Oratio prima synodi Lateranensis."

[2] Ibid., p. 670: "Ad haec Paulus apostolorum decus, cum salutis caput ostenderet, 'Absque fide,' inquit, 'Deo placere nullo modo possumus.' Atqui sine synodis stare non potest fides: absque synodis igitur salvi esse non possumus."

[3] Ibid., p. 669.

[4] Ibid., p. 670.

[5] Tewtsche Theologey, pp. 49-52.

[6] ADN, pp. 29-35.

In summarizing this second major approach to the authority for ecclesiastical reform, we have noted the importance of ecclesiastical obedience. The church whose authority was guaranteed, in part, by the councils, was to be obeyed in the person of its supreme ruler, the pope. The pope, and the commission of Christ on which his authority rested, further guaranteed the authority of the church and provided the fundamental reason why the church should be obeyed. Implicit in the thought of these loyal Catholic reformers is the conviction that one man's opinion should always be subject to the judgment of the church, to its monarch the pope, and to its teaching, doctrine, tradition, and councils. The Reformers were unwilling to submit to any of these when they conflicted with the Word of God. Such tension never appeared to defenders of the church like Geiler, Cajetan, and Eck. To them, such a discrepancy was only visible to those whose vision or perception needed correction.

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[1] My own independent conclusion was substantiated by Francis Oakley, "Almain and Major: Conciliar Theory on the Eve of the Reformation," American Historical Review, LXX (1964-1965), 688-689: "In the early years of the sixteenth century the conciliar theory, despite its previous history, was becoming increasingly irrelevant to the question of ecclesiastical reform, whether conceived in Protestant or Catholic terms." I would suggest that the conciliar theory was irrelevant because of its previous history, not "despite its previous history."

The intriguing question is why some saw a conflict and others did not. To refer to the various authorities they followed is at best only a partial answer. Each side sincerely believed that the best sources of the Christian tradition supported their viewpoint. As in many historical controversies, it is difficult to determine whether those involved took their positions from past authorities, or assumed a viewpoint and then found support for it in the past. The principals involved were convinced they had done the former; historians are tempted to say they did the latter.

The presence of a kind of idealism, particularly among the humanists, reveals itself in their belief that the exercise of responsible leadership would solve the problems of the church. Such a solution was unlikely in that historical situation. More concerned and effective leadership in the early sixteenth century would, no doubt, have altered the situation. But the reliance on the examples of responsible leadership had only a limited hope of success.

The exhortation to work through existing channels, to follow responsible leadership, or to obey ecclesiastical authority was a legitimate proposal for church reform in the sixteenth century. It was a method of reform that nearly everyone favored initially. However, when those in positions of leadership are not responsive to the issues raised by a significant portion of their constituency, it is likely that new leaders will develop new structures. This appears to have happened in the period under consideration. One cannot say what might have happened had Luther found the leaders of the church more responsive to the issues he raised. They, of course, believed that they had given him a proper hearing and had responded in the only appropriate way. Their responsibility was to correct his errors and prevent the disruption of the unity of the church.

E. Eschatology as the Authority for Church Reform

The usual method for discovering the standard for reform was to look to the past. However, not all reform endeavors followed that pattern. The third standard or authority that was suggested looked to the future for ecclesiastical reform and took Christian eschatology as its foundation. Thus the model for reform was not the purity of the primitive church but the ideal of the future kingdom of God.

It has been implied that this kind of outlook was widespread,[1] but that is not the case, at least with respect to those whose opinions were publicly known. Only four writers of the period dealt with this concept to any significant degree.[2]

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[1] John W. O'Malley, "Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the early Sixteenth century," p. 546, and the same author's "Giles of Viterbo: A Reformer's Thought on Renaissance Rome," p. 7.

[2] The four are Giles of Viterbo, Berthold Pürstinger, John Geiler, and Cardinal Cajetan. As will be seen in the course of our presentation, their use of eschatology in church reform varied. Others, of course, discussed eschatology, but with little direct reference to the reform of the church.

Giles of Viterbo was a non-German, but his speech at the Lateran Council and his well-known reform activity made his influence felt on the German ecclesiastical situation. His stress on the importance of councils has already been noted. In his address to the council, Giles coined the phrase for which he is most remembered: "Men are changed by religion, not religion by men."[1]

Giles also talked about the eschatological reform of the church. He believed his own age was the last in the ten ages of Christian history and that reform "would be achieved only in the drastic context of the end of time."[2] The final reform or renovation of the church would be cosmic in scope and would touch every phase of human life.[3] The temptation has been to overemphasize these aspects of Giles' thought, minimizing the fact that he had an active career as a reformer.[4] His eschatological expectations did not permit him to wait patiently for the final stages of history. On the contrary, they were the cause of his dedicated reform activity.

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[1] "Oratio prima synodi Lateranensis," p. 669: "homines per sacra immutari fas est, non sacra per homines."

[2] O'Malley, "Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the early Sixteenth Century," p. 546. See also his "Giles of Viterbo: A Sixteenth Century Text on Doctrinal Development," Traditio, XXII (1967), 447.

[3] O'Malley, "Reformer's Thought on Renaissance Rome," p. 7.

[4] O'Malley places more emphasis on the intellectual concepts of Giles than on his work as a reformer.

The Bishop of Chiemsee, Berthold Pürstinger, also looked toward a future reform of the church. He foresaw the day when four "good shepherds" with the help of all Christians would reform the church. Under the papa angelicus the "universal union" between the Greek and Latin churches would be restored and the entire world would be united in the Christian faith.[1] Pürstinger did not stress active participation in reform as much as Giles had done, but was more content to wait for the reformation, "not with a sword but with a quiet peacefulness."[2] Christ alone by his second coming (spiritualiter) would reform the church.[3]

Cardinal Cajetan at the Lateran Council also made an address which included eschatological implications for church reform. Cajetan's eschatology impinged on his conception of ecclesiastical reform when he discussed the "New Jerusalem." This "New Jerusalem" descends from the sky not by physical steps but by imitation. By this heavenly example (reipublicae beatissimae) God established the earthly rule of the church through the power of Christ.[4] However, Cajetan turned from a future to a past orientation when he noted that this city came not from the minds of the poets or human wisdom but from the proclamation of the apostles, the supplication of the martyrs, and the work of Christ. The coming of this new city would bring about the "peace of Christ."[1]

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[1] Pürstinger, Onus ecclesiae, p. 49.

[2] Ibid., p. 62: "non cum gladio sed quiete pacificia."

[3] Ibid., p. 50.

[4] "Oratio," p. 724: "Descendit autem de coelo non gressibus corporis, sed imitatione ac similitudine, illius namque exemplo quae in caelis est, reipublicae beatissimae, hujus quae in terris est, regimen constituit Deus, ut illud non penes omnes aut multos, sed penes unum Christi vicarium & dominici gregis pastorem consistat." For more on this "New Jerusalem" as an example, see pages 720-722.

The fourth of these churchmen whose concept of church reform included some eschatological considerations was John Geiler. In Geiler's thought, eschatology took on a less apochalyptic, more individual tone. He proposed as a weapon against temptations (Anfechtung) that the Christian should reflect on the last things, death and judgment, heaven and hell.[2] Perhaps there were some eschatological implications when Geiler referred, as he often did, to the petition from the Lord's Prayer asking that God's will be done on earth as in heaven.[3]

Emphasis on eschatological church reform measured quantitatively was not significant in these early years of the sixteenth century. Further, when eschatology is considered in the total context of the thought of the four churchmen we have referred to, it is not their most important contribution. It does provide a more complete picture of the

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1. "Oratio," pp. 724, 723.

2. AS, III, 366: "Denke an die letzten Dinge, und du wirst in Ewigkeit nicht sündigen. Denke also an deinen Tod, an das Gericht, an Himmel und Hölle, und du wirst worsichtig wandeln und mutig streiten."

3. Ibid., III, 357; IV, 275, for examples.

varieties of standards or authorities that were proposed for church reform and perhaps was more influential in the mind of the "man-on-the-street" than in these churchmen we have been discussing.

This chapter has attempted three things: first, to illustrate the search for authority on which to base church reform. The operating assumption of sixteenth century churchmen seemed to be that finding the proper authority could resolve all difficulties. Secondly, it has demonstrated that the citation of an authority alone does not answer all our questions about the history of the Reformation. The controversialists quoted ample authorities to prove their cases, and at times the same authority was used on both sides. Thirdly, we have seen that lines were so clearly drawn that compromise was nearly impossible. Though the reformers had not intended to found a new church, as the situation developed they were led almost unalterably to that position. These battle lines were drawn, not on the basis of the use of authorities, but on the basis of an inner, individual conviction of what the church ought to be. As we shall see in the next chapter, there were real differences of opinion at this point.

Chapter V

CHRISTIAN RENEWAL AS CHURCH REFORM

In a broader sense, church reform meant more than criticism of abuses or glorification of the past. It also involved endeavors for a renewal of the Christian life. This discussion of Christian renewal includes the leading churchmen and humanists of the day but centers on the views of Geiler and Erasmus.[1] The influence of these two men is revealed in the numerous editions of their works which were published from 1510 to 1520.[2]

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[1] Geiler, Erasmus, Cajetan, Eck, Staupitz, Murner, Carlstadt, Melanchthon, Pürstinger, Wimpfeling, Reuchlin, Fridolin, Krafft, and Celtis are included.

[2] The major contribution of Erasmus to a consideration of piety was the Enchiridion, which had at least five editions during our time period, including one German translation. On the significance of the Enchiridion, see Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, pp. 59-60. For the immediate occasion of the writing of the Enchiridion, see Epistles of Erasmus, I, 337-338. Generally, Erasmus felt that Christians were being led astray by the clergy and thus needed a manual of piety. See Allen, III, 366: "Videbam Christianorum vulgus non affectibus modo verum etiam opinionibus esse corruptum. Perpendebam eos qui pastores ad doctores se profitentur, plerosque ad suum compendium Christi titulis abuti . . . ." The significance and influence of Erasmus are universally accepted. Geiler was the writer whose views on the Christian

A considerable part of the effort for reform in the early sixteenth century was directed toward a renewal of the Christian life. There were strong feelings that piety, morality, and the devotional life were the aspects of Christianity that most needed improvement. Men like Geiler and Erasmus worked for a revitalization of the church on the practical or popular level. They attempted to make the Christian life more meaningful to every individual.

Most of this chapter is devoted to delineating some of the important elements that constituted this renewal of the Christian life. It primarily focuses on two major aspects of the Christian life: piety and morality. The last part of the chapter discusses the extent to which it was necessary to base this Christian renewal on a reform of theology.

A. Elements of Christian Renewal: Piety and Morality

1. Life and teaching of Christ. A vital part of Christian renewal in the period under discussion was an

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life seem to have been most frequently published during this period. A survey of printing in Germany reveals forty-two different editions of works by Geiler, nearly all dealing with some aspect of the Christian life. The use of Geiler as an illustration of popular piety during this period is thus justified. No one's writings on the Christian life were more frequently published than Geiler's; and, therefore, judging by this one standard, no one's opinions were more widely sought than were Geiler's.

emphasis on Jesus Christ.[1] For example, the foundation stone for Geiler's position on Christian morality was the life and teachings of Christ.[2] To those who follow his way of wisdom and hear his voice, Christ gives eternal life.[3] Jesus is the light by whose grace the individual Christian is illumined.[4] The Christian bases his morality on imitating the example of Christ and obeying his law.[5]

Geiler's ideal was for the Christian to follow the example of Christ's holiness, living in a way that conformed to the will of God.[6] In a similar way, John Staupitz urged

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[1] However, this does not indicate a new approach since medieval piety was full of references to Christ (See below p. 158, footnote 4.

[2] AS, IV, 144: "Ich lebe nicht mehr wie ich gelebt habe, in Sünden, sondern ich lebe wie Christus; ich denke, rede, handle nach seiner Lehre und in seinem Geiste, bis ich zu ihm komme."

[3] Ibid., II, 293: "Der weg der Weisen ist die Nachfolge Jesu Christi. Die Schäflein Christi hören auf seine Stimme und folgen ihm nach, und er giebt ihnen das ewige Leben, die goldene Krone der Weisheit."

[4] Ibid., IV, 185: "Jesus ist unser Licht, das uns durch seine Gnade leuchtet, so lange wir leben und den Gebrauch unserer Vernunft haben."

[5] This will become obvious as we summarize Geiler's position; Arthur Rich points out a similar basis for the humanists' hopes for Christian renewal: "Christus als ethische Personalichkeit! Das Evangelium als ethische Lehre Christi!" See his Die Anfänge der Theoligie Huldrych Zwinglis ("Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des schweizerischen Protestantism," vol. VI; Zürich, 1949).

[6] AS, IV, 132: "Das erste Zeichen göttlicher Eingebung besteht darin, dass wir dadurch dem Beispiele Christi und seiner Heiligen gleichförmiger werden." Ibid., p. 246: "So sollst auch du deinen Willen aufgeben und ihn allzeit dem göttlichen Willen gleichförmig machen . . . ."

Christians to follow the example of Christ by placing themselves completely in the hands of God.[1] Geiler described the example of Christ by referring to the cross which stood as the model for all men.[2] Both the death and the life of Christ served as a pattern for Christians to follow.[3] Geiler said that "the total life of a Christian is nothing other than a cross."[4] The bearing of his cross was a Christian's responsibility and a sure way to win rewards.[5]

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[1] I.K.F. Knaake (ed.), Deutsche Schriften ("Johann von Staupitzens sammtliche Werke," vol. I; Potsdam, 1867), p. 88. Hereafter cited as DS. For the argument of Staupitz that Christ was not just a law-giver but also the best Christian example, see David C. Steinmetz, Misericordia Dei. The Theology of Johannes von Staupitz in Its Late Medieval Setting ("Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought," vol. IV; Leiden, 1968), pp. 137-140.

[2] AS, II, 383: "So steht denn das Kreuz da als Vorbild aller Menschen."

[3] Ibid., I, 345: "Der Tod Jesu Christi ist uns ebenso wie sein heiliges Leben, zum Vorbilde gegeben." Cf. Staupitz, Ein buchlein von der nachfolgung das willigen sterbens Christi, published in Leipzig in 1515. The text is in DS, pp. 50-88.

[4] AS, IV, 19: ". . . das ganze Leben des Christen ist nichts anders als ein Kreuz." Douglass suggests that Geiler's emphasis on the crucified life implied no rejection of the church but should be placed "in the context of medieval imitation-piety, where the life of Christ--and especially his obedient suffering--is taken as the model for the life of the Christian" (Douglass, Justification in Late Medieval Preaching, p. 136). There are parallels between Geiler's thought and two of the most popular medieval works on piety, The Imitation of Christ and the German Theology. See, for example, Theologia Germanica, edited by Joseph Bernhart (New York, 1949), pp. 215-216: "Moreover, he who will follow him, must take up the cross, and the cross is nothing else than the Christ-life, for that is a bitter cross to all nature."

[5] AS, II, 417: "Solide Tugend und sicheren Lohn gewinnen wir nun durch Mühe und Kampf, durch beständige Kreuztragung."

Erasmus agreed that the highest goal of the Christian was to follow the example of Christ. In Education of a Christian Prince, he answered the question, "Who is truly Christian? Not he who is baptized or anointed, or who attends church. It is rather the man who has embraced Christ in the inner-most feelings of his heart, and who emulates Him by his pious deeds."[1] Christianity was, therefore, a personal experience with Christ that led to a pious and holy life. The Christian is one who "holds and exhibits what Christ taught and showed forth."[2] For Erasmus, too, Christ was the model by which a Christian should pattern his life.[3] Erasmus used the example of the Prince of Peace whenever he discussed the desirability of peace in the world of his day.[4] A basic strategy of Erasmus for the reform of the church was the encouragement of all Christians to follow the example of Christ.

In addition to the example of Christ, the law of Christ played an important role in efforts for Christian renewal in the second decade of the sixteenth century. In the previous chapter we noted Geiler's call for obedience to ecclesiastical authority. He also stressed obedience to the commands and laws of God as an important aspect of the Christian life and a necessary part of any effort toward renewal.[1] In his work, *The Ship of Salvation*, Geiler briefly summarized the Christian life: "Our purpose and our duty is to observe the commandments of God."[2] He had a simple, moralistic view of what it meant to obey God's commands.[3] God had ordained that man could achieve eternal life by observing his commands.[4]

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[1] Education of a Christian Prince, p. 153.

[2] Christian Humanism, p. 101. AW, p. 146: "sed si quod Christus docuit et exhibuit, id teneat exprimatque."

[3] Christian Humanism, p. 115. Allen, III, 366: "archetypo Christo." Hutten urged the Christian to follow Christ so that other Christians would also follow his leadership (Gesprächbuchlein, p. 90).

[4] For example, Complaint of Peace, pp. 17-18.

Geiler's simple call for obedience to the law of Christ carried with it the implication that everyone knew what that obedience would entail. Confusion must have entered the minds of many people when, in the later part of the second decade of the sixteenth century, they heard obedience to God's commands being interpreted in contradictory ways. Those on both sides of the controversy no doubt considered it self-evident that the commands of Christ clearly supported their own position.

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[1] Douglass, *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching*, p. 136.

[2] *AS*, IV, 230: "Unser Ende und unsere Aufgabe ist die Beobachtung der Gebote Gottes." Geiler concluded the *Twenty-One Articles* with a call "zu halten die gebot gottes und sine glori in allen dingen suchen; der gelobt sy in ewigkeit." See *Die ältesten Schriften Geilers von Kaysersberg*, edited by L. Dacheux (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1882), p. 41.

[3] In his *Narrenschiff* Geiler referred to the exhortation in Matthew 6: 33 to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things shall be added to you." His comment on the passage was: "Und was ist seine Gerechtigkeit, die Gerechtigkeit des Reiches Gottes? Es ist die Beobachtung der Gebote Gottes, nicht lügen, nicht schwören, die Festtage halten, die h. Messe hören u.s.w." (*AS*, II, 140).

[4] See *Ält. Schrift.*, p. 186: "Angedenck bis deines endes. darumb du geschopfft bist und der mittel. dardurch du das ende erlangen magst dein end darub du geschopft bist. ist ewig lebe. die mittel dardurch man das ende erlanget. ist haltum ge der gebot gotes." In some of the manuscripts the reference is more specifically to the Ten Commandments (see page 187). For Geiler's discussion of the Ten Commandments, see *Ält. Schrift.*, pp. 146-151. Douglass points out that Geiler also used obedience to the commands of God as a test to distinguish between heresy and true piety (*Justification in Late Medieval Preaching*, p. 78).

Other reformers interpreted obedience to the commands of God in terms of the law of Christ (lex Christi). Medieval lay reform movements had placed a strong emphasis on the law of Christ, particularly as it was found in Matthew's gospel.[1] The theme was also present among the humanists. Erasmus traced many of the problems facing the church to the fact that it had abandoned the law of Christ in deciding matters of great importance. The lex Christi had been replaced by "the definitions of scholastics and the power of some bishop. And the situation has been so hopelessly muddled that there is not even a hope of recalling the world to authentic Christianity."[2] Beatus referred to Christ as "our legislator, a living book

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1. Hermelink, Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus, p. 18.

2. Christian Humanism, p. 73. Allen, II, 102: "Breviter eo redacta res est ut negocii summa non tam ex Christi praescripto quam ex scholasticorum definitionibus et episcoporum qualiumcunque potestate dependeat: quibus rebus sic involuta sunt omnia ut ne spes quidem sit mundum ad verum illum Christianismum revocandi." The hopeless attitude in this letter to Martin Dorp in 1515 raises questions about the true feeling of Erasmus when compared to his prediction of a golden age in a letter to Capito in 1517 (Allen, II, 487).

of divine philosophy."[1] Mutian wrote to Justus Jonas and condemned those who did not live according to the rule of Christ which constrains one from thinking about fuller wallets or tomorrow's food.[2] Staupitz discussed how following the law of Christ (gesetz Christi) was more difficult than following the law of Moses.[3] The life and teachings of Christ figured prominently in the proposals for a renewal of Christianity. Christ was the finest image of the Christian life.

2. Vices and virtues. The moralistic impulse in Geiler's piety was present in his repeated discussions of vices and virtues. In several passages, Geiler discussed the seven chief sins or vices of man: pride, envy, anger, avarice, idleness, unchastity, and gluttony.[4] His comments on these sins or vices are not incisive and will not be examined at

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[1] Briefwechsel, p. 51: "solus enim legislator noster Christus, vivens divinae philosophiae liber."

[2] In Jonas, Briefwechsel, I, 6: "Non ad Christi normam vivitur, quae nos ultra peram sapere ac de crastino cibo cogitare vetat."

[3] He contrasted the Old Testament law with the law of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount: "Den alten ist gesagt, du solt nit unkewsch sein, das gesetz Christi verpewt einen iden unreinen gedancken . . . ." (DS, p. 162) He also noted the radical nature of the decision on the part of the Christian to follow Christ: ". . . er auch sich selbst sol hassen, verlieren, und verlougnen, und mit dem kreütz taglich Christo nachvolgen" (ibid.).

[4] See Von der Beicht (Ält. Schrift., pp. 162-170), Die Beichtspiegel (Ält. Schrift., pp. 140-145), or Sieben Schwerter und sieben Scheiden (AS, IV, 345-392). Bishop Pürstinger followed a similar pattern in examining the people of his day in terms of the seven deadly sins (Onus ecclesiae, p. 37).

length. His discussion of one of these sins illustrates his approach.

Geiler identified as manifestations of avarice the obvious sins of robbing and stealing. He also included false and deceitful dealings in trade or business, simony, usury, or perjury for material gain. In addition, a person who was ungrateful to God or who did not give to charity and support works of compassion was also avaricious.[1]

In Seven Swords and Seven Sheaths Geiler demonstrated his understanding of the effects of avarice on human nature in a deeper, more psychological way. The individual loses control of himself and is captured by avarice. Avarice turns his heart against the poor and "the more he possesses, the more hard-hearted he becomes."[2] Dissatisfaction and the desire for more riches torment him day and night. It is only a small step to the decision to use force and violence to take from the weak the possessions which they are unable to protect.[3]

The solution that Geiler offered to overcome avarice was a simple one: prayer for forgiveness from God for the

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1. Ält. Schrift., pp. 141, 165-166.

2. AS, IV, 360: "Vorerst verhärtet sich sein Herz gegen die Armen. Je mehr er besitzt, desto hartherziger wird er. Mit der einen Hand rafft er zusammen, mit der anderen hält er fest . . . ."

3. AS, IV, 360-361: "Zu dieser Hartherzigkeit gestellt sich die beständige Unruhe und Begierde, noch mehr zu gewinnen. Tag und Nacht wird er von dieser Sorge gequält. Von da ist nur ein Shritt zu Gewaltthätigkeiten gegen die Schwachen, Die Herren und Machthaber nehmen mit Gewalt und widerrechtlich den Unterthanen und Armen, die sich nichtwehren können, das Ihrige."

fraudulent way one has dealt with his neighbor. The Christian should pray for a heart willing to correct all injustices.[1]

Wimpfeling also discussed at some length the classical vices and virtues. He was fearful that many scandals would arise due to the failure of the clergy to live according to the evangelical rule.[2] He warned a young friend about the vices to be avoided: "Moreover flee pride, vain glory, boasting, ostentatious ambition . . . ."[3]

In addition to the avoidance of the vices, the Christian life required the practice of the virtues. In his discussion of the Christian as a pilgrim, Geiler allegorically identified the various aspects of the Christian life as part of the clothes, equipment, or attitude of the pilgrim. The virtues were the pilgrim's shoes.[4] Just as strong shoes made the journey of the pilgrim easier, so the virtues eased the path of obedience to God.[1] Geiler demonstrated his concern about the "new morality" of his day in a passage which contrasted the qualities of old and new shoes:

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[1] AS, IV, 361: Verzeihe uns jeden Betrug, den wir gegen unseren Nächsten durch Simonie und übervorteilung in Handel begangen haben, und wofür wir ihm schuldig sind, Rückerstattung zu leisten. Gieb mir, o Herr, ein williges Herz, damit ich alles Unrecht gut mache, und lasse mir mein Unrecht nach, das ich gegen meiner Nächsten gethan habe, sowie auch ich ihm gerne um Gottes willen verzeihe."

[2] Knod, "Neun Briefe von und an Jacob Wimpfeling," p. 235: "Timeo enim scandala multa suboriri, ex levitate, lascivia, laxisque habenis atque conscientiis quorundam religiosorum, qui non ad regulam evangelicam, non ad sacrorum canonum, non vel ad legis Naturae tenorem vivere mihi videntur, sed omnia sua dicta et facta exempcione et privilegiis (quae examinanda forent) defendunt."

[3] Ibid., p. 237: "Vos autem superbiam fugite, vanam gloriam, iactantiam, ambicionem ostentacionem . . . ."

[4] AS, III, 152-167.

> These old shoes reach high above the foot and can be tightly laced so as to permit no stones or sand to enter the shoe and bother or injure the foot. However, the new kind of shoes are cut so low they scarcely reach up to the ankles and thus provide no protection and sureness for the feet. So it is with the new lax teachings which, not being based on natural or divine law, promote too much freedom and offer no certainty of salvation.[2]

The pilgrim should zealously practice the virtues in order to proceed happily and with certainty on the difficult path to eternal life.[3]

Geiler's most specific and extensive discussion of the virtues was Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit based on Galatians 5:22.[4] In the introduction Geiler explained the reason for emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit: "The apostle calls these the fruits of the Holy Spirit because all effects of the Holy Spirit rest on the servants of Christ . . . and because every deed of man that is pleasing to God is brought about by the grace of the Holy Spirit."[1] In his discussion of the Christian pilgrim he urged Christians to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit if they would not be led astray.[2]

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[1] AS, III, 156: "Ohne Schuhe geht man drittens gar schlecht; die Steine und die Scherben richten den Fuss übel zu. Ebenso können wir nicht ohne grosse Schmerzen und Verletzungen auf dem Wege der Gebote Gottes wandeln, wenn wir keine Übung in der Tugend besitzen."

[2] Ibid., p. 159: "Diese alten Schuhe gehen hoch über den Fuss und sind gut zugeschnürt und lassen kein Steinchen und keinen Sand einschlüpfen, dass der Fuss davon belästigt oder Verwundet werden könnte. Die neumodischen Schuhe aber, die so weit ausgeschnitten sind, dass sie kaum bis an die Knöchel reichen, gewähren dem Fusse keinlerlei Schutz und Sicherheit. So ist es auch mit den neuen laxen Lehren, die nicht im natürlichen und göttlichen Gesetze gegründet sind, die Freiheit allzu sehr begünstigen und keine Sicherheit des Heiles bieten."

[3] Ibid., p. 167: "Und so soll denn der christliche Pilger recht eifrig in der Ubung jeder Tugend sein, damit er an den Füssen wohl beschuhet frohlich und sicher voranschreite auf dem Wege zum ewigen Leben."

[4] Ibid., I, 369-447. The work was first published in Latin in 1495. There was a German edition published in 1519.

From the Pauline passage Geiler listed these virtues as the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, mildness, faithfulness, modesty, temperance, and purity.[3] Love, joy, and peace received the most attention in his works. He defined love as the desire to please God and to do his will. Love made the soul of the

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[1] AS, III, p. 371: "Der Apostel nennt sie Früchte des h. Geistes, weil alles Wirken des h. Geistes auf dem Verdienste Christi beruht . . . und weil alles gottgefällige Thun des Menschen durch die Gnade des h. Geistes geschieht."

[2] Ibid., III, 161: "Wir sollen den besonderen Einsprechungen des h. Geistes folgen. Wenn dieselben aber von dem gemeinen Wege, der allen Christen vorgezeichnet ist, abführen, so müssen wir vollkommene Sicherheit haben, dass sie vom h. Geiste herrühren, wenn wir nicht auf Abwege geführt werden wollen." In Das Schiff des Heils Geiler explained that the favorable wind for the ship was the grace of the Holy Spirit (AS, IV, 121-137): "Soll die Fahrt glücklich von statten gehn, so ist es nicht genug, dass das Schiff einen Mastbaum und Segel hat, es bedarf auch günstigen Windes, der das Segel schwellt und Schifflein zieht und treibt und begleitet, ist die Gnade des heiligen Geistes, welche uns zuworkommt, uns folgt und uns begleitet." (p. 121) Staupitz also emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian: "Unsere hertzen werden durch gossenn (spricht Paulus) mit der lieb von dem heiligen geist, der uns geben ist, der geist des hymelischen vaters, der geist Christi . . . ." (DS, p. 98)

[3] AS, I, 371-447.

Christian conform more closely to the image of God.[1] The object of the Christian's love was both his neighbor and God, whom he loved through his neighbor.[2] Geiler contrasted the joy of the world with the virtuous joy that God alone could bring.[3] The peace which the Christian enjoys was likewise a gift of God and not a human accomplishment.[4] This peace of soul "exists in the harmony of the faculties of our soul with one another, with the neighbor, and with God the highest good."[5] Love is the prerequisite before this peace comes into the life of the Christian.[6]

The humanists also stressed the importance of a virtuous life. In addition to his fervent desire for knowledge and education, Erasmus emphasized love as a more important virtue:

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1. AS, I, p. 372: "Sie ist das Wohlgefallen am Guten, und, weil Gott das höchste Gut ist, das Wohlgefallen an Gott, und der Wille zu thun. Diese Liebe ist eine Frucht des h. Geistes, der selbst die Liebe ist, und unsre Seele durch die Liebe zu seinem Abbilde macht."

2. Alt. Schrift., p. 137. AS, II, 415; III, 23: "Diese Pflicht ergiebt sich einfach aus dem Gebote der Liebe, denn wenn wir Gott lieben, so müssen wir unsere Liebe zum Haupte durch unsere Liebe zu den Gliedern zeigen."

3. AS, I, 375-376. In Das Narrenschiff Geiler criticized those who "die Freuden dieser Welt hochpreisen und sich mit ihnen begnügen" (AS, II, 118).

4. Ibid., I, 380: "Es giebt einen andern guten Frieden, der aber nicht menschlich, sondern göttlich ist."

5. Ibid., pp. 380-381: "Er besteht in der Harmonie unserer Seelenkräfte unter einander und mit dem Nächsten und mit Gott, der höchsten Gute."

6. Ibid., p. 383: "Willst du Frieden haben, so musst du lieben."

"It is better to know less and love more than to know a great deal and love not at all."[1] He contrasted true Christian love with the kind of activity commonly referred to as charity within the Church: "And do not tell me, presently, that charity consists of frequent church attendance or genuflecting in front of the images of saints or burning candles or repeating a specified number of prayers. God is not impressed by such routines."[2] The implication is clear: God is impressed by genuine deeds of love and kindness. Erasmus made a striking application of this emphasis on love to the Turkish threat which many Europeans feared in his day. He suggested that even as Christ himself "subdued the whole world by goodness, longsuffering and holy doctrine, it may be that in like manner we shall better overcome the Turks by the piety of our lives than by arms."[3]

Particularly in the case of Erasmus, there is a close relationship between theology and morality. Erasmus was interested in theology mainly because of its influence on Christian behavior.[1] The purpose of his Enchiridion was to contribute to a theological life, not to a theological argument.[2] His expression of piety included a strong moralistic emphasis: piety resulted in a holy life. In the Enchiridion Erasmus stated that his purpose was "to outline a way of life for you, not a course of study."[3] In his basic work on theological method he wrote, "in the end you will be able to judge your progress, not by ability to argue sharply, but by whether or not you are changed in some way."[4]

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[1] Enchiridion, p. 96.

[2] Ibid., p. 122.

[3] Epistles of Erasmus, II, 201. Allen, II, 85: "beneficentia, patientia, sancta doctrina sibi subegit universum orbem, ita rectius Turcas vitae pietate subacturi simus quam armis." In a letter to Paul Volz, Erasmus said it should be made clear that we "strive for nothing except their salvation and Christ's glory" (Christian Humanism, p. 113. Allen, III, 364: "praeter eorum salutem et Christi gloriam nihil omnino quaerere"). This must have sounded like poor advice to the political realists of the day. The menacing armies of the Turks appeared to be camped on Europe's doorstep waiting for the proper moment to attack. Not many people would be willing to rely on deeds of kindness as the means to end the Turkish threat.

The crucial question was not doctrine or theology, but behavior. Theology had only a practical interest to Erasmus. It was useful when it helped to answer ethical or religious questions.[5] No baptism with holy water, no

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1. The works of Erasmus are non-dogmatic and, in many cases, almost non-theological, especially when compared to other ecclesiastical writers of the day. Erasmus was active until his death in the attempts to overcome the theological differences between Catholics and Protestants. For his influence on Charles V, see Robert Stupperich, Der Humanismus und die Wiedervereinigung der Konfession (Leipzig, 1936).

2. Christian Humanism, p. 110. Allen, III, 36: "Non faciat ad disputationem theologicam, modo faciat ad vitam theologiam."

3. Enchiridion, p. 55. Cf. page 107, "I recommend, therefore, that you study the commentaries of these men (Platonists), for I want to instruct you, not in scholastic quibbling, but in good living."

4. Quoted from the "Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam" by Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 157.

5. Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, pp. 46-47. Phillips, Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance, p. 160.

veneration of the saints, no contact with relics could match the example of a holy life.[1] Theological disputation was of minimal significance. Converts were won not by words but by deeds. Christ came to teach theology or doctrine only in a secondary way. His main purpose was to set an example of holy life--the ideal which all Christians were to imitate.

Wimpfeling and Celtis were other humanists who stressed the importance of living a virtuous life. Wimpfeling's advice was "above all to fear God . . . to love purity, to flee youthful shamelessness, and to shrink back completely from all kinds of levity, licentiousness, passionate desires, and pride."[2] In the same passage he continued: "Preferably follow moral philosophers and God-fearing theologians. In philosophy and sacred literature seek your happiness, to increase the honor of God, to make clean your conscience, and to produce the salvation of your soul."[3] Wimpfeling counseled a young man with whom he was corresponding to live according to the virtues of frugality, temperance, modesty, and humility.[4]

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1. Enchiridion, p. 111.

2. ALF, p. 202: "ante omnium Deum timete . . . castimoniam amate, impudicos adolescentes fugite, & ab omni levitatis, lasciviae, libidinis, superbiaeque specie prorsus abhorrete."

3. Ibid.: "sequimini potius morales philosophos, & Deum timentes theologos; in philosophia & sacris literis vestram quaerite felicitatem, in quibus & honorem Dei augere, vestras conscientias serenare, vestrarumque animarum salutem parere."

4. Knod, "Neun Briefe von und an Jacob Wimpfeling," p. 237: "Saepe verbis exhortatus sum vos ad frugalitatem, ad temperanciam, ad modestiam, ad humilitatem."

Celtis urged his readers to a virtuous life as the only way to assure eternal bliss: "Climb nobly up the strait and narrow path of virtue, for thus only is it given to you to lead a tranquil life. Virtue alone promises bliss, rest and honour in the heavenly home and takes away the fear of the Stygian prison and its dismal shades."[1]

Sixteenth century Christians were acquainted with the traditional vices and virtues. It was not difficult to understand Geiler when he condemned anger and praised patience; no sophisticated theological knowledge was required. His ideas were simple enough to be communicated to the people and were couched in their language. Geiler's simple proclamation contrasted sharply with the sophisticated approach of Erasmus. This might account for the numerous editions of Geiler's works that were published and for the fact that the Enchiridion was not translated into German until 1520.

A simple call to avoid the vices and practice the virtues would have little permanent effect on the ecclesiastical situation. The idea of renewing the Christian life in light of these vices and virtues was noble but left unanswered the question of how this was to be accomplished. Neither a simple reminder, nor a fervent exhortation, to live virtuously would bring about striking and permanent change. The Reformers were convinced that the Christian life was not what it ought to be. They envisioned the Christian ideal but lacked an effective program to bring it about.

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[1] Selections, pp. 32-33.

3. Good works. Geiler emphasized the importance of good works in the life of a Christian. His favorite image was to compare man's good works to the fruit of a tree.[1] Taking his inspiration from Matthew 7:7, he compared the buds, leaves, blooms, and fruit of a tree to the thoughts, words, plans, and works of a man respectively.[2] A Christian does not perform good works for his own sake. If he stands in grace, man turns his good works "to God, from whom he has received grace, and his neighbor whom he serves because of God."[3] The love of God and the sacrifice of self-interest result in good works. "The righteous seeks not his own glory, but what is Jesus Christ's."[4]

After Geiler's death there was considerable debate about good works within the church. The main issue was whether they were necessary for salvation. Geiler equivocated somewhat on the question. He discussed the necessity of good

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1. "Der Mensch ein Baume," AS, II, 319-372.

2. Ibid., p. 343: "Die Bäume treiben zuerst Knospen und Blätter, dann tragen sie Blüten und bringen endlich Früchte. So auch der Mensch. Seine Knospen sind die guten Gedanken, welche er fasst, seine Blätter die guten Rede, welche er führt, seine Blüten die guten Vorsätze und seine Früchte die guten Werke."

3. Ibid., p. 350: "So wendet auch der Mensch, der sich im Gnadenstande befindet, die Frucht seiner guten Werke nicht sich, sondern Gott zu, von dem er die Gnade dazu empfangen hat, und der Nächsten, welchem er um Gottes willen dient."

4. Ibid., p. 296: "Das ist der Weg der Tugend, der guten Werke, der Liebe Gottes bis zur Verachtung unserer selbst. Der Gerechte sucht nicht das Seinige, sondern was Jesu Christi ist."

works for eternal life[1] but also argued that one cannot attain or earn eternal life by good works.[2] It is both unfair and unhistorical to judge Geiler's position by the course of a later debate. However, throughout his works he emphasized the work of God in salvation and the Christian life. Whether that permits us to project that he would have agreed with Luther's position on free will and good works is questionable.

4. The Christian pilgrim. Perhaps Geiler's most distinctive contribution to the renewal of the Christian life was his emphasis on the Christian as a pilgrim.[3] The Christian was not a citizen of this world but a pilgrim returning to his heavenly fatherland.[4] Once more Geiler illustrated his

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[1] "Die nützen guten werck zu dem ewigen leben," Ält. Schrift., pp. 152-154. Douglass solves the problem of Geiler's equivocation, at least to her own satisfaction, in her discussion of the practical significance of Geiler: "In one passage he emphasizes strongly the doing of morally good works. Let no one say that such works done outside grace are lost! Though not directly meritorious of eternal life, they bear much fruit as disposition for grace" (Justification in Late Medieval Preaching, p. 143).

[2] AS, IV, 107: "Ebenso gelangen wir nicht mit einem guten Werk in den Himmel." Note the similar position taken by Staupitz, DS, p. 39: "Ein ydes mensch ist von got darzu beschaffen, das er alhie so lang er In diesem sterblichen leib ist In gottes krafft und gnad tugentliche Werck Wurchen soll, aber In dieselben seine gute werck gantz nit vertrawen oder ainisch hoffnung haben, das Ine die zur seligkait bringen werden." This contrasts with the position of Stephan Fridolin who said that one attains the rewards of heaven according to the measure of his good works (Schmidt, p. 46).

[3] "Der christliche Pilger," AS, III, 1-298.

[4] Ibid., II, 143: "Wir sind nicht in unsrer Heimat, sondern in der Verbannung; wir sind nicht Bürger hiemieden, sondern Pilger." See also III, 6.

point by referring to the example of Jesus Christ whom he described as "the wisest arch-Pilgrim."[1] Virtue and good works were the greatest treasure of the Christian pilgrim--a product of his journey.[2]

Geiler identified the virtues of faith, hope, love, and patience with the pilgrim's bag, staff, coat, and hat respectively. The pilgrim carries in his bag all that he will need on his journey; all the Christian pilgrim needs is contained in his true, complete, and lively faith.[3] The pilgrim's staff supports him when he is tired, keeps him from falling, and serves as a weapon if he is attacked. The Christian's staff is his firm hope in the Lord.[4] The pilgrim's coat must cover his head and body. The Christian's love should likewise cover the head (God) and the body (neighbor).[5] The pilgrim requires a good hat to protect him against bad weather; the Christian's hat for the journey to heaven is patience in the face of pain and affliction. Without patience, the Christian will turn away from God.[6]

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[1] AS, III, 145.

[2] Ibid., p. 246.

[3] Ibid., p. 39.

[4] Ibid., p. 59: "Sein Stab ist eine gute, grosse, und feste Hoffnung auf den Herrn."

[5] Ibid., pp. 80-85.

[6] Ibid., p. 116: "Der Pilgerhut für die Riese zum himmlischen Vaterland ist aber die Geduld. Diese ist uns notwendig zum Schutze gegen die Leiden und Bedrängnisse auf unserer irdischen Pilgerfahrt, damit sie uns nicht niederschlagen, uns nicht von Gott abwenden."

As a pilgrim, the Christian must avoid the pitfalls along the way which might delay or end his journey. Having disdained the pleasures of the world, he should not burden himself down with worldly goods.[1] He should shun evil associations with the devil, the world, and the flesh.[2] The Sacrament nourishes the Christian on his journey.[3] His pilgrimage ends when he reaches the heavenly fatherland where he will be free from sin and will enjoy eternal rest in God.[4] Geiler's use of the image of the pilgrim typifies much of his discussion on the Christian life.

5. Devotional life. The fifth element of the renewal of piety was the emphasis on the devotional life. Its purpose was to determine the divine will for each individual and to provide the divine assistance necessary for the living of a good life. The devotional life included Bible reading, preaching, prayer, and other ecclesiastical practices.

The previous chapter summarized Geiler's position on the use of the Bible. The Bible, which everyone could read, showed the way to heaven. It taught the Christian what to believe and what to do.[1] It was the "bread of the soul."[2]

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[1] AS, III, pp. 177-182, 245.

[2] Ibid., p. 190: "Auch du, christlicher Pilger, musst auf deiner irdischen Pilgerfahrt drei böse Gesellen meiden: den Teufel, denn er ist verrätisch, die Welt, denn sie ist verschwenderisch, und das Fleisch, denn es ist faul."

[3] Ibid., pp. 262-269.

[4] Ibid., pp. 294-295: "Hat der Erdenpilger seine Laufbahn glücklich wollendet, so kehrt er zum himmlischen Vaterlande zurück, frei von Sünden und Strafen; er wird von dem ganzen himmlischen Hofe ehrenvoll empfangen und geniesst nun die ewige Ruhe in Gott."

Nearly everyone in the sixteenth century used the Bible as a major source for his religious thought.[3] Melanchthon wanted all Christians to immerse themselves in the Bible which could "be understood by all of the faithful with as little difficulty as possible."[4] In his preface to the 1516 edition of the New Testament, Erasmus expressed his desire that the Bible be translated into the common languages so that everyone could read it. This would counter the opinion that "the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it."[5] In a well-known passage, Erasmus described the advantages of translations of the Bible:

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[1] AS, III, p. 187: "Unsere Karte auf dem wege zum Himmel ist in erster Linie die heiligen Schrift des alten und neuen Testaments, worin Gott der Herr uns lehrt, was wir glauben und thun müssen, um zum ewigen Leben zu gelangen."

[2] L. Pfleger (ed.), " 'Von den zwölf schefflin.' Eine unbekannte Predigt Geilers von Kaysersberg," Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte, VI (1931), 214: "Daz brot der selen ist das gottich wort."

[3] We shall here only note the way Melanchthon and Erasmus joined with Geiler in urging the use of the Bible in the devotional life.

[4] Select Writings, p. 51. The Latin text is in Werke, I, 47: "Immo hoc benignus dei spiritus agebat, ut ab omnibus piis quanto minimo negotio intelligeretur." Cf. the passage in the Loci Communes (Werke, II/1, 4): "Immo nihil perinde optarium, atque si fiere possit, christianos omnes in solis divinis literis liberrime versari et in illarum indolem plane transformari."

[5] Christian Humanism, p. 97. AW, p. 142: "sive quasi religionis Christianae praesidium in hoc situm sit, se nesciatur."

> Would that, as a result, the farmer sing some portion of them at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveller lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind! Let all conversations of every Christian be drawn from this source. For in general our daily conversations reveal what we are. Let each one comprehend what he can, let him express what he can.[1]

Erasmus urged all Christians to take their rule for life from the Bible.[2] He criticized those who fell down and worshipped or kissed the supposed relics of Jesus but who ignored the Gospels and Epistles which perfectly revealed Christ.[3] Once more the practical bent of Erasmus is clear. The Bible revealed Christ's pattern of behavior, not his theological doctrines.

For his hermeneutical principle Erasmus proposed going as far as possible beyond the literal meaning.[1] One example of the far reaching effects of a literal interpretation of the Bible was the decline in monastic devotion. The monks were "decaying in literalism and not striving for insight into the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures."[2] Erasmus confused the legalistic attitude and spirit in some monasteries with a literal and simple interpretation of the Bible. However, in actual practice, his interpretation was not highly allegorical but came very close to following the simple and literal sense of the Scripture.[3]

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[1] Christian Humanism, p. 97. AW, p. 142: "Utinam hinc ad stivam aliquid decantet agricola, hinc non nihil ad radios suos moduletur textor, huiusmodi fabulis itineris taedium lenet viator. Ex his sint omnia Christianorum omnium colloquia. Tales enim ferme sumus, quales sunt cotidianae nostrae confabulationes. Assequatur quisque quod potest, exprimat quisque quod potest."

[2] Christian Humanism, pp. 101-106. AW, pp. 146-149. See Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, p. 145: "Die Schrift vermittelt uns das lebendige Bild des Christus. Das ist der entscheidende Grund, warum Erasmus die Schrift so sehr hochschätzt und liebt und warum er sein Leben in ihren Dienst gestellt hat. Sie vermittelt dem Menschen die lebendige Begegnung mit Christus." Cf. Kohls, Die Theologie des Erasmus, I, 77: "Neben dem Existenzgrund des christlichen Lebens in Gott und Christus besteht der Erkenntnisgrund, der allen christlichen Aussagen vorgegeben ist, für Erasmus in der heiligen Schrift," and I, 98: "Christi Bild sehen die Gläubigen in vollendeter Weise in der heiligen Schrift."

[3] Allen, II, 170: "Si quis ostentet Christi vestem aut pedis vestigium, procumbimus, adoramus, exosculamur. Atqui ut universas illius vestes et totam maternae domus supellectilem proferas, nihil est quod Christum expressius effecacius, absolutius referat, exprimat, repraesentet quam Evangelistarum et Apostolorum literae."

Preaching was the basic tool that Geiler advocated and used in his attempt to renew the Christian life.[4] The preaching of the word of God was a useful agent of reform because it served as a mirror in which the Christian could see his inner appearance.[1] Staupitz made a similar point about preachers. God had given his people preachers to correct vices and to instruct in virtue.[2] Later in his life, Erasmus devoted considerable attention to a work on preaching.[3]

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[1] Enchiridion, pp. 53, 55, 105-107.

[2] Ibid., p. 54.

[3] When Erasmus suggested avoiding the literal meaning of the Bible, he did not have in mind radically allegorical interpretations such as sometimes had been proposed in the history of the church. He meant that one should not read the Bible as simple stories or history but should strive to find the personal meaning for his life. "What does it matter whether you study the books of Kings or Judges, or the history of Livy, if you look at the veiled meaning in neither?" (Enchiridion, p. 106)

[4] Chrisman, Strasbourg and the Reform, p. 68. For a discussion of Geiler's preaching, see Douglass, Justification in the Late Middle Ages, pp. 30-37, 82-91. For background material see Rudolf Cruel, Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter (Detwold, 1879), and Eduard Lengwiler, Die vorreformatorischen Prädikaturen der deutschen Schweiz von ihrer Entstehung bis 1530 (Freiburg, 1955).

Geiler counseled prayer, particularly the _pater noster_, in the devotional life of every Christian.[4] Erasmus advocated a mature Christian use of prayer, but he said little about it.[1] In his handbook of piety, he criticized the superstitious and ritualistic mumbling of prayers that went on in the church of his day:

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[1] _AS_, II, 328: "Ebenso dient uns die heilige Schrift und die Predigt des Wortes Gottes zum Spiegel, in welchen wir erkennen, wie wir innerlich aussehen, ob wir rein und gut, ode oder schnutzig und böse seien." Geiler's stress on the importance of hearing preaching may be seen in his response to a practical question that arose in Strassburg. The bakers were excusing themselves from mass because they had to work so that the people might have bread on Monday. Geiler did not approve of their absence (_Ält. Schrift._, p. 25).

[2] _TP_, p. 162: "Dedit dominus populo suo alios praedicatores, qui eciam huiusmodi vicia racionabiliter corrigere debent et populum diligenter informare."

[3] In the _Ecclesiastes or, On the Way to Preach_, his most voluminous work, Erasmus gave careful instruction and numerous examples on the art of preaching. He believed that preaching, the most dignified task of the cleric, could result in the improvement of society. He wrote: "The people become more obedient to the authorities, more respectful towards the law, more peaceable. Between husband and wife comes greater concord, more perfect faithfulness, greater dislike of adultery. Servants obey more willingly, artisans work better, merchants cheat no more" (Huizinga, _Erasmus and the Age of the Reformation_, pp. 181-182).

[4] Douglass, _Justification in Late Medieval Preaching_, p. 212. Cf. _AS_, _passim_. Geiler's main work on prayer was _De oratione dominica sermones_ (Latin edition published at Strasbourg in 1509; German translation published in 1515). This work was unfortunately unavailable for this study. A selection from the work is published in Hasak, _Der christliche Glaube_, pp. 468-484. For an explanation of prayer as a part of the dispensation of God's grace, and the conditions for the granting of prayers, see Douglass, _Justification in Late Medieval Preaching_, p. 147.

> When you pray, do you by any chance consider only how many psalms you mumble your way through? Do you think the virtue of prayer lies in longwindness? This is the great failing of those who, only infants as yet, have never outgrown the literal sense and ripened to spiritual maturity.[2]

Prayer was the vehicle by which our souls are carried to heaven for protection from the enemy.[3]

Geiler and Erasmus approved of other traditional parts of the devotional life of the church. Geiler sanctioned fasting and reflection on the pain and horror of hell to prepare the Christian for virtue.[4] Erasmus permitted meditation on the cross of Christ as a valid part of the Christian's devotional life. Meditation on the passion attacked the desires of the flesh and overcame temptations.[5]

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[1] Kohls, Die Theologie des Erasmus, I, 41, 78, 89, argues that prayer was an essential element of the Christian life for Erasmus. As evidence he notes that Erasmus began and ended the Enchiridion with a prayer. However, Erasmus might well have felt that he would be expected to open and close a manual of piety with a prayer. Judging by the over-all argument of the Enchiridion, prayer does not seem to be as important as Kohls suggests.

[2] Enchiridion, p. 48.

[3] Ibid., p. 47: "That we should always be armed with prayer and with knowledge is the wish of Paul, who commands us to pray without ceasing. Undefiled prayer lifts our spirits heavenward, a citadel manifestly inaccessible to the enemy."

[4] AS, II, 189. Ält. Schrift., pp. 155-156.

[5] Enchiridion, pp. 171-173.

B. The Distinctive Contributions of Erasmus

It is appropriate to comment further on some of the distinctive contributions of Erasmus. We shall not attempt to prove that Erasmus was the originator of these concepts. Our purpose is to show how Erasmus gave so sophisticated and so persuasive expression to these ideas as to make them in some respects distinctively his own.

1. Christianity a personal religion. Erasmus forcefully advocated a renewal of the Christian life. One of his primary objections to the religion of his day was its non-personal character. Christianity meant nothing at all if it did not mean that each individual must have an internal and personal religious experience.[1] The Christian religion was a religion of the inner spirit and not of external ceremony or observance.[2]

In explaining his purpose in writing the Enchiridion, Erasmus said:

> The Enchiridion was not composed for any display of genius or eloquence, but only for the purpose of correcting the common error of those who make religion

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[1] John P. Dolan's introduction to his translation of Erasmus' Handbook of the Militant Christian (Notre Dame, Ind., 1962), p. 22: "As a result of Erasmus' focus on the attitude of the subject toward God, his whole theology is marked by an enthusiastic personalism, and a lively sense of the person is at the base of his reformatory efforts."

[2] In his book Érasme: Sa Penśee religieuse et son action d'après son correspondence (1518-1521) (Paris, 1926), p. 9, Augustin Renaudet notes that on several occasions Erasmus affirmed "la necessite de restaurer la religion du pur esprit."

> consist of ceremonies and an almost more than Jewish observance of corporeal matters, while they are singularly careless of things that belong to piety.[1]

In another passage Erasmus condemned external observances which exhibited no real affection for Christ. Both the problem and the solution were internal matters: "Perhaps you believe your sins are removed once and for all by a wax seal, by giving a little money or by making a little pilgrimage. You are completely off the track. The wound has been inflicted within, and the remedy must be applied within."[2] The basic goal of Erasmus was to shift the emphasis from the objective means of salvation to the individual's direct relationship to God.[3]

Erasmus did not value the religiosity of a monk more highly than the piety of a dedicated layman. Every Christian, not just the monk, was to practice perfect piety.[1] Erasmus did not advocate the monastic way of life as the ideal for every man. Some Christians were not morally or physically suited for it.[2] Erasmus urged every Christian to have the concern for his brothers that the monk ideally had. And the whole world should be his monastery.[3]

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[1] Epistles of Erasmus, I, 376. Allen, I, 405: "Enchiridion non ad ostentationem ingenii aut eloquentiae conscripsi, verum ad hoc solum, ut mederer errori vulgo religionem constituentium in ceremoniis et observationibus pene plusquam Iudaicis rerum corporalium, earum quae ad pietatem pertinent mire negligentium."

[2] Enchiridion, p. 128. Cf. Phillips, Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance, p. 50: "In a world where religion had largely become a matter of ceremonies and conventional observances, Erasmus, the pupil of the Brethren, uses the reserves of his eloquence to make a fervent restatement of the essential character of religion, the cult of the invisible."

[3] Hermelink, Die religiosen Reformbestrebungen des deutsche Humanismus, pp. 31-32. Wallace K. Ferguson, "Renaissance Tendencies in the Religious Thought of Erasmus," Journal of the History of Ideas, XV (1954), 502.

2. The philosophy of Christ. Perhaps the most distinctive contribution Erasmus made was "the philosophy of

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[1] See Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, p. 188. The relationship between Erasmus and the devotio moderna and his dependence on the movement has been debated. In later years Erasmus tried to disassociate himself from the movement, particularly disliking its emphasis on the cloister life; but Auer thinks Erasmus owed more to it than he would admit (pp. 29-30). Auer points out four lines of interest which Erasmus shared with the devotio: (1) classics, (2) Bible, (3) patristics, (4) personal, inner piety (pp. 30-37). These common interests do not, of course, necessarily mean that Erasmus was dependent on the movement. Mestwerdt notes that Erasmus challenged the movement but carried on some of its emphases (Die Anfänge des Erasmus, p. 174). To Otto Schottenloher, the unfavorable report Erasmus made on the school at Deventer indicates his lack of enthusiasm for the movement (Erasmus im Ringen um die humanistische Bildungsform, p. 59). Schottenloher also discusses the wider relationship between humanism and the devotio (pp. 1-25). Kohls believes "dass Erasmus dabei in einer grossen Traditionslinie insbesondere zur Devotio Moderna steht . . ." (Die Theologie des Erasmus, II, 53).

[2] In the Enchiridion, pp. 198-199, he wrote, "Monasticism is not piety but a way of living, either useful or useless in proportion to one's moral and physical disposition. For my part, I neither urge you into it nor dissuade you from it. This only I suggest: that you not define holiness by what you eat, by ritual or by an visible object . . . ."

[3] Allen, I, 568: "Quanto magis est e Christi sententia totum orbem Christianum unam domum et velut unum habere monasterium, omnes concanonicos et confratres putare; baptismi sacramentum summam religionem ducere, neque spectare ubi vivas sed quam bene vivas."

Christ." Although the term had previously been used by Abelard and Agricola, Erasmus gave it the fullest expression in the sixteenth century.[1] It was used by other humanists,[2] though it cannot be said that it became the slogan for the whole group or even provided a summary of their program.[3]

In a letter to Paul Volz, Erasmus explained what he meant by the philosophy of Christ:

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[1] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 204. For a brief survey of interpretations of this concept, see Guido Kisch, Erasmus und die Jurisprudenz seiner Zeit. Studien zum humanistischen Rechtsdenken ("Basler Studien zur Rechtswissenschaft," hft. 56; Basel, 1960), pp. 457-461. A. Renaudet offers this comment on the purpose behind the philosophy of Christ as Erasmus expressed it: "Erasme ne veut être qu'un simple moraliste, et ses maîtres à philosopher sont Plutarque et Cicéron. La philosophie du Christ s'accorde aisément avec la sagesse pratique des Adages. Elle est une éthique humaniste, revue et corrigée selon l'Evangile." See his Études Érasmiennes, p. 147. Margaret Mann Phillips has attempted to summarize the philosophy of Christ: "Elle signifiait que l'enseignement du Christ se distinguait des philosophies humaines en n'étant pas uniquement intellectuel; c'est un corps de principes qui est à la base d'une vie d'action, qui a d'autres ressources que l'intelligence, qui parle au coeur. D'autre part, c'est toujours une philosophie, qui ne se méfie pas de l'intelligence comme font les mystiques, mais qui s'appuie sur les textes sacrés et leur interprétation par la raison. Cette phrase situait donc l'idéal d'Érasme à mi-chemin entre le mysticisme et l'intellectualisme." See her "La 'Philosophie Christi' reflétée dans les 'Adages' d'Érasme," in Courants religieux et humanisme a la fin du xve et au début du xvie siècle ("Travaux du centre d'études supérieures spécialisé d'histoire des religions de Strasbourg," Paris, 1959), p. 66.

[2] For example, Beatus Rhenanus, Briefwechsel, p. 136. Beatus concluded a letter to Zwingli of February 1519 with an "adhortatio ad Christi philosophiam." Cf. Oskar Farner, Zwingli the Reformer, translated by D.G. Sear (New York, 1952), p. 28, on the relationship between Christian humanism and the philosophy of Christ.

[3] This is what Spitz seems to suggest in Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 19.

> Thus, in my opinion, it would be most convenient if the task were assigned to some men as pious as they are learned to draw together in a short statement the whole philosophy of Christ from the most pure sources of the Gospels and the Epistles and from the most approved interpreters, and to do this with simplicity in so far as it is still clear. Let those things which pertain to faith be related in as few propositions as possible. Let those things which pertain to the way of life be communicated also in a few statements, and let them be transmitted in such a way that they may understand that the yoke of Christ is sweet and agreeable, not harsh, that they have found fathers, not tyrants, shepherds, not robbers, and that they are called to salvation, not dragged away into slavery.[1]

Such a statement was what Erasmus had intended, no doubt, with the Enchiridion. He called for a simple and Biblical piety, which gave the believer assurance and emphasized ethics over theology. With the possible exception of its length, the Enchiridion fulfilled what Erasmus had in mind.

One element of the philosophy of Christ was the duty for every Christian to be a philosopher, but Erasmus quickly added that he did not mean philosopher in the usual sense of the term.[1] The only requirements were a "pious and open mind, possessed above all with a pure and simple faith."[2] In contrast to the subtle and sophisticated philosophy of the scholastics, the philosophy of Christ should be "as simple as possible and accessible to all. Let our aim be not to appear learned but to lead as many as possible to a Christian life."[3] Conrad Celtis agreed on the importance of true philosophy for religion but leaned more to a natural religion than did Erasmus.[4]

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[1] Christian Humanism, p. 114. Allen, III, 365: "Commodissimum itaque mea sententia fuerit si muneris hoc viris aliquot iuxta piis ac doctis delegetur, ut ex purissimis fontibus Evangelistarum et Apostolorum, ex probatissimis interpretibus universam Christi philosophiam in compendium contrahunt, ita simpliciter ut tamen erudite, ita breviter ut tamen dilucide. Quae pertinent ad fidem, quam paucissimis articulis absolvantur. Quae ad vitam, item paucis tradantur, et sic tradantur ut intelligant Christi iugum blandum et commodum esse, non asperum; ut intelligant sese patres esse nactos, non tyrannos; pastores, non praedones; ad salutem vocari, non ad servitutem pertrahi." On this letter see P. Mesnard, "Un texte important d'Érasme touchant sa 'philosophie Chretienne,' " Revue Thomiste, XLVII (1947), 524-549. Mesnard refers to the philosophy of Christ as "la theologie veritable" (p. 524).

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[1] *Education of a Christian Prince*, p. 150: "I do not mean by philosopher, one who is learned in the ways of dialectic or physics, but one who casts aside the false pseudo-realities and with an open mind seeks and follows the truth. To be a philosopher and to be a Christian is synonymous in fact. The only difference is in the nomenclature."

[2] *Christian Humanism*, p. 96. *AW*, p. 141: "Tantum fac afferas pium ad promptum animum et in primis simplici puraque praeditum fide." On the importance of simplicity in the philosophy of Christ, see Otto Schottenloher, *Erasmus im Ringen um die humanistische Bildungsform*, p. 113: "Die Reinheit und Einfachheit des Evangeliums wird zum höchsten Ideal und zur Norm für das Leben wie für die Lehre."

[3] *Christian Humanism*, p. 112. Allen, III, 364: "ut eam quam fieri potest reddamus facillimam et omnibus expositam: neque illud sit nobis studio, ut ipsi literati videamur, sed ut quamplurimos ad Christianam vitam pelliciamus."

[4] "The foundations of religion cannot be better grounded and maintained by any better person than by a true philosopher . . . ." Quoted by Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, p. 29. Some questions have been raised concerning the sources of the thought of Erasmus on the philosophy of Christ and, therefore, its appropriateness as a "Christian" position. Hermelink, *Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus*, p. 26, suggests that Jesus and Paul were interpreted by Erasmus through stoic or platonic sources: "Jesus und Paulus werden von Erasmus verstanden, sofern sie nach seiner Meinung die 'Philosophie' lehren. Unter 'Philosophie' versteht er gleich den Humanisten vor ihm einen stoisch-platonisch-eklektischen Moralismus, wie er in Cicero gefunden werden

There is little room for doubt concerning the importance of Christ in the piety of Erasmus, although some have not taken seriously his emphasis on the Savior and God's grace.[1] In the Enchiridion Erasmus exhorted the Christian to a complete dependence on the grace of Christ:

> Do not ponder, do not weigh how much you are giving up. Christ alone will surely take the place of everything else. Dare to trust yourself to Him with all your heart; dare to distrust yourself; dare to transfer every care you have to Him. Stop relying upon yourself; cast yourself with complete confidence upon Him, and He will receive you.[2]

Erasmus charted a middle course between excessive reliance upon God or upon human effort:

> If we fight according to his example, we shall eventually be victorious through Him; therefore, you must steer a middle course . . . shunning both excessive reliance on God's favor which would make you slack and careless, and the distrustful anxiety over the hazards of war, which would simultaneously deprive you of your weapons and your stomach for fighting.[3]

The philosophy of Christ which Erasmus described did

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konnte. Platos Schrift über den staat und sein Phaedo und namentlich Ciceros Bücher von den Pflichten und dessen Tuskulanen atmen eigentlich schon christlichen Geist; ein Unterschied zwischen ihnen und der Philosophie Christi ist nicht zu finden." On the other hand, Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 142, identifies the main source of Erasmus as the Greek Fathers, particularly the Alexandrians and the Cappadocians, and therefore argues that his sources are distinctly Christian.

[1] Auer, Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen, pp. 116-118.

[2] Enchiridion, p. 88. In an earlier section Erasmus had said concerning Christ: "To Him who, first and uniquely free from sin, quelled sin's tyranny you must attribute every victory you win." (pp. 45-46)

[3] Ibid., p. 46.

not take the form of tightly-woven propositions about philosophical concepts.[1] It was neither abstract nor complicated. It was a simple, Bible-believing faith in the life and teachings of Christ and a commitment to follow his example.[2] As such, it is basic to the reform strategy of Erasmus and significant to the life of the church.

3. Christian folly. Erasmus suggested another element in the renewal of the Christian life--the concept of Christian folly. At this point, at least among his contemporaries, Erasmus was unique. In Praise of Folly he made fun of all members of society including himself. The entire work appears to be a special kind of ridicule--ridicule with a serious purpose. One imagines that readers laughed at the satire but also felt the sting of his criticism. In the last two sections, when Mistress Folly described Christian folly, one gets the feeling that in the climax of the book Erasmus

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[1] Etienne Gilson, from his Thomistic perspective, criticizes the philosophy of Christ proposed by Erasmus: "Let us suppose he is right, let us even admit the desirability of reminding the Christian philosophers that philosophy should never be allowed to lead to forgetfulness of the Gospel; by what right does Erasmus add that the Gospel itself is a philosophy? If Christians had no right to anything outside the Gospel and the Church, doubtless there would be nothing lacking to their Christianity, but is it quite certain that they would still possess a philosophy?" See his The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, translated by A.H.C. Downes ("Gifford Lectures 1931-1932," New York, 1940), p. 415.

[2] Joseph Coppens, Les Idées Réformistes d'Érasme dans les préfaces aux paraphrases du Nouveau Testament ("Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalis," ser. III, fasc. 27; Paris, 1961), pp. 344-371.

was completely serious.[1]

Erasmus maintained that the Christian religion had some affinity with folly because

> no fools seem to act more foolishly than do the people whom zeal for Christian piety has got possession of; for they pour out their wealth, they overlook wrongs, allow themselves to be cheated, make no distinction between friends and enemies, shun pleasure, glut themselves with hunger, wakefulness, tears, toils, and reproaches; they disdain life and dearly prefer death; in short, they seem to have grown utterly numb to ordinary sensations, quite as if their souls lived elsewhere and not in their bodies. What is this, forsooth, but to be mad?[2]

It is as if Erasmus were saying that, at least in the standards of the world, there is no fool like a Christian fool.

When Erasmus described Christian fools "as if their souls lived elsewhere and not in their bodies," the neoplatonic elements in his concept of Christian folly became obvious. The Christian rejects material or corporeal things to turn toward the spiritual realm. Unlike the majority of people who emphasize riches and bodily comforts, the religious "pay less attention to anything the more nearly it concerns the body, and they are wholly rapt away in the contemplation of things unseen." The Christian concentrates as much as possible on the purity of God's essence and makes only grudging concessions to the material and impure things of the flesh:

> The religious with one accord direct their first endeavors toward God himself, the purest of all existences;

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[1] *Praise of Folly*, pp. 118-124.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 118.

> next to Him toward that which yet comes as close as possible to Him, namely the soul. They neglect the care of the body. They altogether disdain riches as mere nutshells, and turn their backs upon them. Or if they are forced to handle matters of the kind, they do so grudgingly and uneasily, having as if they did not have, possessing as if they did not possess.[1]

The religious man removes himself as far as possible from the grosser senses, touch, hearing, sight, smell, taste, to concentrate on those not so closely tied to the body: memory, intellect, and will. The folly or madness of a Christian is also revealed during those times of meditation or contemplation when the soul is given a foretaste of eternal bliss. When the experience is over, they do not know where they have been nor what has happened to them, but they know they were at their happiest. Mistress Folly concluded that this was certainly a strange kind of foolishness.[2]

4. Human nature. This neo-platonic rejection of the material influenced the understanding of human nature held by Erasmus. Man is divided into three parts: flesh, soul, and spirit. Flesh and spirit are the two opposing forces within man. The soul is that part of man which must choose to side either with the flesh or the spirit. The soul is caught in a struggle between two approaches to life; and "if, renouncing the flesh, she draws over to the spiritual part, she will herself become spiritual; but if she lowers herself to the desires of the flesh, she will herself degenerate into

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1. Praise of Folly, p. 120.

2. Ibid., pp. 121-124.

carnality."[1]

Erasmus related the philosophers and Paul by identifying the "reason" of the philosophers with the "spirit" of Paul, and the "passions" of the philosophers with his "flesh."[2] A Christian should act according to the dictates of reason and not according to the passions, according to the spirit and not the flesh. This has led some interpreters of Erasmus to conclude that he was a rationalist.[3] However, the piety of the philosophy of Christ was based on simple apprehension and imitation of the example of Christ, not syllogisms or a rationalistic process. Erasmus was an idealist in the sense that the goals or ideals of the Christian life were clear and could be followed by the simplest of persons without training in logic.[1]

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[1] Enchiridion, p. 79. See also page 80: "To sum up, then, spirit makes us godlike; the flesh brutish. The soul makes us men: spirit makes us good men, flesh makes us vile men, but the soul itself makes us neither good nor bad. The spirit desires things celestial; the flesh, things pleasurable; the soul things related to it. The spirit lifts us toward heaven, the flesh pushes us down toward hell, the soul has neither power ascribed to her. Whatever is carnal is base, whatever is spiritual is perfect, whatever is soul is neutral--to be neither sought nor shunned." There are probably more neo-platonic than biblical influences in the view of Erasmus. Erasmus had contact with neo-platonism through his English friends, Colet and More, who were themselves influenced by Ficino. Perhaps Erasmus came into contact with the thought of Ficino while studying in Italy. On neo-platonism in Erasmus, see Kohls, Die Theologie des Erasmus, I, 44, 60; II, 43, 62, 77.

[2] See Enchiridion, p. 72.

[3] For example, Preserved Smith, Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History (New York, 1923), p. 441: ". . . that he recognized reason as the final arbiter in these matters as well as in social and political affairs--all this is the noble genius of Erasmus."

Knowledge was also important in the Christian life. It was knowledge that put "intellect in touch with salutary ideas"; prayer makes intercession but "knowledge suggests what ought to be prayed for."[2] But "salutary ideas" were not the way to virtue. Erasmus believed that the only way to virtue was to begin by knowing one's self.[3]

Knowledge and reason each play a part in the virtuous acts of a Christian. Knowledge teaches us about ourselves and about the examples we are to follow. We are to act according to the dictates of our reason, not the desires of the flesh. However, when Erasmus identified reason with spirit he took his stand nearer the Apostle Paul than the modern rationalist.

In short, Erasmus made these contributions to the renewal of piety: (1) an emphasis on a personal, spiritual religion, (2) the conviction that piety must result in a holy life, (3) a return to the philosophy of Christ, (4) the concept of Christian folly, (5) a combination of a neo-platonic and a biblical understanding of man.

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[1] Phillips, Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance, p. 84, places Erasmus in between mysticism and rationalism: "And though Erasmus could no more be called a mystic than a rationalist, it is in keeping with his character that he should occupy a middle position between the two. Both the rational method and the more direct spiritual grasp are necessary, and faith completes the work of reason, just as Christ's teaching lets in a flood of light on the groping of the classical moralists."

[2] Enchiridion, p. 47.

[3] Ibid., p. 70: "This, therefore, is the only way to virtue: first, that you know yourself; second, that you act, not according to the passions but the dictates of reason. And let reason be sound and healthful; that is, let it look only to what is honorable."

5. Erasmus and Geiler. Erasmus and Geiler agreed at many points on Christian renewal. They both wanted to revitalize the religion of Christians so that it would be more meaningful and would result in a changed life. They both talked far more about piety and morality than about theology. They were both orthodox and conservative, intending no radical opposition to the church and no innovative spiritual program. The roots of both were in medieval piety.

Their differences are matters of style or emphasis. There were no strong differences of opinion. Geiler's style was simpler and less sophisticated than that of Erasmus. Geiler's activity was aimed at Christian renewal, and his writing was only a means to further that end. Erasmus was more intellectual and more academically oriented. Geiler was directly concerned with the care of souls; Erasmus was directly concerned with writing and editing.

C. Reform of Theology

Geiler and Erasmus said little that had not been present in one form or another in the medieval tradition. Their concerns were fundamentally practical and devotional, not theological. There was some sentiment for a reform of theology, mainly among the future leaders of the Reformation. This theological challenge, and the Catholic response to it, provides an opportunity to examine certain issues which proved to be significant as the Reformation developed.[1] What was the place of theological reform in the broader context of ecclesiastical reform? What was the extent of important theological differences in our time period? The answers to these questions lay the foundation for a later evaluation of the importance of theology to the course of the Reformation.

1. *Grace*. One of the Reformers' basic reasons for deciding that a reform of theology was necessary for Christian renewal was their conviction that contemporary theology had de-emphasized the significance of the grace of God.[2] A fundamental point at issue between Eck and Carlstadt was whether the total good work of man was done by God.[3] Carlstadt said

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[1] One example of this sentiment is Philip Melanchthon who was very critical of the theology of his day. He felt that the statements of the "sophists" on human merit were "blasphemias esse in iniuriam gratiae dei ementitas" (*Werke*, II/1, 34). The result of their teaching on the sacrifice of the mass was that "obliterata est Christi gratia" (*Werke*, I, 84).

[2] The accuracy of their charge has not yet been fully researched by historical scholarship with respect to the practice on the local level. It can be said with more certainty that the charge was incorrect on the level of the theologians of the church. Gerrish is correct when he points out that the medieval church "found grace as indispensable for justification as did the Reformers themselves" ("Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation," p. 337). The leading defenders of the church's theology at the time seem to provide ample proof that the charge was erroneous, or at least over-stated.

[3] Carlstadt wrote: "Eckius volue dicere, totu opus bona esse a deo sed no sine concursu & activitate liberi arbitrii" in *Confutatio Andreae Carolostadii Edita Adversus defensivam epistolam Ioannis Eckii* (Wittenberg, 1520), p. 5. Melanchthon described the Leipzig debate and the way in which Carlstadt

that man's good deeds should be attributed to the divine will, not the human will.[1] Grace must both prepare the way for[2] and actually accomplish man's justification.[3] A proper life is a "divine gift," a "special concession from God." Human free will can do nothing but lead a man to sin.[4] Man could not accomplish his own salvation; but "what would otherwise be impossible for us men, through the grace of God may be possible."[5] Without grace no man could do good works or be

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pressed Eck for saying that the total good work was done by God, but not totally (leaving room for the exercise of the human will): "deinde a Carolostadio rogatus, largireturne totum opus bonum esse a deo, respondit, totum quidem, non autem totaliter" (Werke, I, 7). See also Seitz, LD, p. 219.

[1] Quoted by Eck in Defensio contra amarulentas D. Andreae Bodenstein Carolstatini Invectiones, p. 61: "Ex pręmissis inferetur, quod bona operatio non voluntati humanę, sed divinę debet simpliciter attribui."

[2] Seitz, LD, p. 23: "ipsa enim gratia inquit hoc omni genere medendi atque auxiliandi agit, ut in eo, quem vocat, primam sibi receptricem et famulam donorum suorum praeparet voluntatem."

[3] Ibid., p. 22. See Carlstadt's opinion in Karlstadt und Augustin; der Kommentar des Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt zu Augustins Schrift De spiritu et litera, edited by Ernst Kähler ("Hallische Monographien," vol. XIX; Halle, 1952), p. 24. Hereafter cited as KA.

[4] Carlstadt, KA: "Ipsum bene vivere est donum divinum, a deo specialius concessum" (p. 38); "Si autem liberum arbitrium non habuerit dei charitatem, nihil valet nisi ad peccandum" (p. 39).

[5] Ibid., p. 94: "quod alias nobis hominibus esset impossibile, per fratiam dei fit possibile." Cf. p. 82.

justified.[1] The thrust of Carlstadt's argument is that the Catholics denied the grace of God its full place by assuming that man of his own free will could save himself.

Eck expressed surprise at Carlstadt's charges which implied that the theology of the church left no room for the activity of God.[2] He wrote that Carlstadt "attributes to me what I have never thought--that it is possible to do meritorious good works without the special assistance of divine grace and mercy."[3] Eck was astounded by his opponent's suggestion that he trusted his own will to save him.[4]

Eck and Cajetan, the two most prominent defenders of the Catholic tradition, had thought it was a commonly held opinion that God was the source of all the good done by man.[1] Eck wrote: "I even know that my speaking is nothing unless God makes it something."[2] The difference between Carlstadt and Eck was a matter of degree. Both recognized the activity of God in human affairs: Carlstadt believed salvation and good works were completely the result of God; Eck argued for a cooperative effort between the grace of God and the will of man.[3] Carlstadt and Eck agreed that it was God who moved the will of man and gave the gifts of penitence and faith. Eck added that God gave man faith and penitence as long as man did not refuse to accept it.[4]

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[1] Note the following four theses among those quoted by Th. Kolde, "Wittenberger Disputationsthesen aus dem Jahren 1516-1522," p. 452: "36. Deus non praetendit iusticiam suam hominibus quia recti sunt corde, sed ut recti sint corde. 37. sine deo operanti ut velimus et cooperante cum volumus ut faciamus ad bona opera nihil valemus. 40. Hereticum est confirmare, quod deus in donis suis sit posterior et nos priores. 58. Ad iusticiam nemo convertitur nisi operante gratia sanetur."

[2] Eck responded by informing Carlstadt that he already knew that man must rely on the mercy of God and not his own works for salvation, citing Biblical passages to prove the point (Romans 9: 16, 18; John 6:44; Titus 3: 5; II Corinthians 3: 5). See Defensio, p. 67.

[3] Defensio, p. 68: ". . . iterum mihi imponendo, quod nunquam cogitavi, quoniam libere confiteor, nunquam fieri aliquod bonum opus meritorium sine speciali assistentia divinae gratiae et misericordiae." The phrase "sine speciali assistentia divinae gratiae" was often repeated by Eck. Seitz, LD, pp. 227-228. For Eck's condemnation of Pelagianism, see Seitz, LD, p. 18, and Defensio, p. 75.

[4] Defensio, p. 70: "Non enim pono spem in me pauperrimo homunculo, sed inactavi spem meam in Dominum, qui 'deducet me et enutriet me.' " For a similar confession by Geiler, see AS, I, 323-327.

Staupitz stated the need for reliance on the grace of God more strongly than did Eck or Cajetan. Man's efforts were futile without God whose will and power must work salvation in the individual.[1] The Christian's hope rests not on his love of God but on the love and mercy of God which flows incessantly.[2]

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[1] Defensio, p. 66: "Sed omnia bona nostra sint a Deo, qui est communis theologorum sententia." Cajetan, in his address to the Lateran Council, agreed that man can do nothing without the help and work of God: "Sed quoniam nihil est, quod homo de semetipso sine auxilo opeque divina possit polliceri . . . ." ("Oratio," pp. 719-720).

[2] Defensio, p. 69: "Scio enim orationes meas esse nullas, nisi Deus faciat esse aliquid."

[3] We will turn our attention specifically to the potentialities of man in a later part of this section.

[4] See Carlstadt's view quoted by Eck in Defensio, pp. 54, 60. Eck responded "Fateor ergo, Deum dare poenitentiam homini, sicut etiam fides est donum Dei, modo nos homines fragiles non contemnamus eam accipere" (Defensio, pp. 68-69).

The need to rely on the grace of God is found both in the Catholic theologians and in those preachers and churchmen who spoke more directly to the people. Ulrich Krafft, a popular preacher at Ulm during this period, stressed that when he died he would not rely on his own good works but on the mercy and goodness of God.[3] Stephan Fridolin, a Franciscan preacher, emphasized in his sermons the work of Christ and the grace of God.[4] Bishop Pürstinger argued that the believer would be able to do nothing without the grace of Christ.[1] Geiler repeatedly stated that man in his own power and ability could do nothing but must rely on the grace of God.[2] Grace depended on the free will and decision of God, not on man's service or choice.[3]

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[1] *DS*, pp. 19-21. In his sermons on Job, Staupitz utilized the same line of argument saying that it was God who gave, not fortune or fate, and God who took away, not the devil (*TP*, pp. 211). Cf. *DS*, p. 34, where he argued that all credit should be given to God: "Das wir alle unnsere tugent und gute werck nit unns Sonder allain got zuaignen sollen." Cf. Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei*, p. 114: "Staupitz agrees with Thomas Aquinas in affirming the impossibility of meriting either election or justifying grace."

[2] *DS*, p. 101: "Demnach grundet sich die Hoffnung in keinen weg auff die lieb die wir zu got haben, auff die werck die wir gote thuen, Sonder sy grund sich auff die lieb die got zu uns hat, auff die werck die got in uns wirckt." The source of the Christian's love of God was the revelation of God's love to man (p. 102). On God's mercy, see *DS*, pp. 22-23, 40.

[3] The sermon in which Krafft made this point was published in 1517. A selection from it has been printed in Hasak, *Der christliche Glaube*, p. 437: "aber ich will gern sterben dann ich waisz das wir ain güetigen got haben, auff des barmhertizikait und güetigkait, will ich sterben, und nit auff meine gute werck."

[4] ". . . und kommen zu dem ewigen Leben denn durch die Gnade Gottes, so sollen wir Gott bitten, dass er uns lebendig mache in dem Leben der Gnade." (quoted by Schmidt, p. 42)

At this point two conclusions are evident. First, contemporary Catholic theology was not so completely a theology of "work-righteousness" as Carlstadt and Melanchthon implied. Perhaps on the parish level a "work-righteousness" was more prevalent. But, among the theologians of the church there is not the flagrant kind of "work-righteousness" that the Reformers thought existed. Secondly, there was not complete agreement about theological questions. It was unanimously agreed that God's grace was necessary in the life of a Christian. It was not agreed whether this was all that was necessary. Some felt that man cooperated with God in the process of salvation. Rejecting this concept of cooperation, Melanchthon and others believed that a reform of theology was

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1. Tewtsche Theologey, p. 537.

2. AS, IV, 293: "Das besagt doch recht deutlich, dass der Mensch sich nicht aus eigener Kraft von der Habgier befreien könne, dass dies nur die Gnade vermöge. Darum sollen wir diese Sünde vor allen fürchten und fliehen, weil man sich ihrer nicht so leucht wieder erwehren kann." Cf. II, 345; III, 91.

3. Ibid., IV, 124.

necessary.[1]

2. Free will. Closely related to the doctrine of grace is the doctrine of free will. There was general agreement on the necessity of God's grace, but the potential of

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[1] There is considerable need for more detailed study of late medieval theology. Currently in the forefront of the renewed historical interest in late medieval theology is Heiko Oberman who has provided a significant point of departure for this scholarly effort. See his *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). The use of the word "harvest" in the title indicates Oberman's approach. He does not examine Biel as representative of the "decline" of theology at the end of the Middle Ages, nor only as a background for the Reformation, but as a significant theological figure standing between Thomas and Luther. See also his collection of sources, *Forerunners of the Reformation*. One of the crucial theological issues was the meaning of the phrase, "facere quod in se est." Does that indicate a kind of "work-righteousness"? In addition to the works already cited, see Oberman's "Facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam. Robert Holcot, O. P., and the Beginnings of Luther's theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, LV (1962), 317-342. Oberman points out that Luther's discovery of the *iustitia Dei passiva* meant more than "merely the *assertion of the prevenience* of grace. Indeed, it had this anti-Pelagian thrust; but if this had been the sum of it, Luther's position would not have been a 'new' insight, since there had always been a medieval anti-Pelagian school of thought." See his "The Reformation: Proclamation of Grace," *Review and Expositor*, LXIV (1967), 165. The distinctive contribution of Luther was his "identification of the righteousness of Christ and the justice of God, of the *iustitia Christi* and the *iustitia Dei* (*activa*). According to the tradition he confronted, the *iustitia Christi* is the process of justification, usually initiated or in any case sustained by the gift of grace or charity. But the gift of *iustitia Christi* never implies the gift of the *iustitia Dei*. The *iustitia Dei* remains the standard for the justified *viator*, the criterion according to which the religious health and progress of the pilgrim on his way to the eternal Jerusalem is evaluated. The *iustitia Dei* remains the law according to which the fruits of the granted righteousness of Christ are to be tested on the day of judgment" (*ibid.*). For a fuller discussion of this point, see his article, " 'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei.' Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification," *Harvard Theological Review*, LIX (1966), 1-26.

man's free will was one of the most heated theological debates in the early sixteenth century.[1] The arguments of Carlstadt and Eck, representatives of the two basic alternatives, briefly illustrate the course of the debate. It is tempting to conclude that in some ways Carlstadt and Eck were not far apart.[2] The Catholic theologians of the time did not proclaim a "work-righteousness." Carlstadt stressed the work of God but also agreed that righteousness did not come without the activity of the human will.[3] Eck similarly argued that the human will played a role in meritorious works "without excluding the grace and special help of God."[1]

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[1] The 1525 writings of Erasmus and Luther are the best-known expressions of this debate. Harry J. McSorley has argued that the basic issue of the Reformation (or at least for Luther) was the potentialities of the human will. He sees a growing agreement among Catholics and Protestants on this point as a part of the ecumenical spirit. See "The Key Issue of the Reformation: A Catholic Reassessment after 450 Years," *Dialog*, VI (1967), 261-264. Charles Trinkaus differs with what he calls the usual interpretation of the Renaissance by noting that both the Renaissance and the Reformation objected to the qualities assigned to the human will in medieval thought, though the reformers objected more strenuously than did the humanists. See his "The Problem of Free Will in the Renaissance and the Reformation," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, X (1949), 51-62. Note especially p. 58: "Whereas medieval thought attributed to man the rational capacity both to lead a moral life in the ordinary secular pursuits of this world and to achieve salvation, both the humanists and the reformers denied that man could do both. The humanists took the first step and denied the possibility of subordinating economic to moral ends, but left man the necessary free will to flee contamination by the world and to gain salvation by his own powers, if he so chose. The reformers, particularly Luther, also denied that there was any possibility of morality in business or politics but took the further step of denying man the power of achieving either virtue or justification by his own free will."

[2] Such a view at least entered the mind of Eck since he closed his *Defensio* with the hope that their verbal differences might be overcome (p. 82).

[3] *KA*, p. 37: "Tametsi iusticia non fiat sine hominis voluntate, tamen dei operatione est tribuenda."

However, this apparent agreement is broken when one closely examines Carlstadt's position. For example, at the Leipzig debate Carlstadt specifically denied "that free will has special and natural activity in good works."[2] He quoted Augustine that "grace is not given because we have done good works but in order that we may be able to do them."[3] He rejected the view that free will could accomplish any good, saying that prior to grace free will could only lead to sin.[4] Carlstadt pressed Eck on whether the grace of God was the total cause of good works. Eck equivocated in trying to show that "grace and free will were one total cause of meritorious works, but grace was the principal cause, free will less principal."[5] His statement that "good works are in some ways in our power, and in some ways not" reveals his equivocation.[1] His kinship with medieval theology was clear when he referred to the nominalist contention that God would not require of man something that he could not do.[2]

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[1] Seitz, LD, p. 15: "intendo ergo probare illud esse conveniens sacrae scripturae, sanctis patribus, fidei christianae, liberum arbitrium voluntatem humanam habere causalitatem activam, vim productivam, elicitivam operis meritorii, non excludendo gratiam et speciale adiutorium dei."

[2] Ibid., p. 30: "quod liberum arbitrium habeat specialem et naturalem activitatem in bonis operibus."

[3] KA, p. 83: "Non datur gratia quia bona opera fecimus, sed ut ea facere valeamus."

[4] In Eck, Defensio, pp. 55-56. For Melanchthon's report of this and Eck's opposition to Carlstadt's view, see Werke, I, 16.

[5] Seitz, LD, p. 32: "Propositum meum erat ostendere, gratiam et liberum arbitrium esse unam causam totalem operis meritorii, sed gratiam principalem, liberum vero arbitrium minus principalem." Throughout the debate Eck was concerned with defending himself against the charge of Pelagianism and thus repeatedly emphasized the priority and prevenience of God's grace.

The differences between Carlstadt and Eck are at times confusing. However, they disagreed over the fundamental issue involved in a discussion of free will: for Eck, man cooperated with God, although God's grace was the more important element in salvation or meritorious works; for Carlstadt, man's will could do nothing except sin--God must do it all. The difference was not so radical as Carlstadt suggested. Eck did not believe that the free decision of man's will brought about the grace of God, but he did believe that man cooperated with God in salvation (he could at least reject the offer of God's grace). It was at that point that Carlstadt differed with Eck very strongly and thus was convinced that the theology of the church needed to be reformed.

3. Faith. The third theological issue was the nature of faith. Staupitz stressed the leadership of the Holy Spirit and God's grace in faith.[3] Interestingly, Eck, Carlstadt, and

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[1] Defensio, p. 70: "Bona opera sunt quodammodo in potestate nostra, quodammodo non . . . ."

[2] Ibid., p. 71: Cf. Geiler's view on free will which arose out of a pastoral conviction that the individual should be encouraged to do all he can before expecting God to help him. See AS, III, 167. Cf. Douglass, Justification in Late Medieval Preaching, p. 161.

[3] DS, pp. 99-100.

Staupitz all agreed that faith was a gift of God.[1]

In his frequent discussions of the concept of faith, Geiler described it as the guiding or directing aspect of the Christian life. The Christian "orders and arranges his life completely according to faith."[2] Faith was the compass that led the ship to the haven of salvation.[3] Geiler sometimes referred to faith as faithfulness or loyalty.[4] Faith, hope, and love were the godly virtues because they put man in right relationship with God.[5]

Bishop Pürstinger and Melanchthon both said that faith was the origin of justification, but the bishop denied that it made one completely just.[6] For Melanchthon it was faith alone that justifies.[7] He contrasted the true understanding of faith and the understanding held by the "Sophists." In the

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[1] Eck, Defensio, pp. 68-69. Staupitz, DS, p. 141: "Diser gloub Christi ist so notturfftig, das an den unmöglich ist, got wol zugewallen, nun mögen wir den von uns selbst nit erlangen, darumb das fleisch und plut inen nit eröfnen, wann es ist ein gab gots . . . ." Carlstadt, KA, p. 87: ". . . fides donum dei est."

[2] AS, III, 54: "er ordnet und richtet sein Leben ganz nach den Glauben ein."

[3] Ibid., IV, 79: "Unser Kompass, nach welchem wir das Schifflein unsres christlichen Lebens lenken müssen, und der uns sicher untrüglich in den Hafen des Heils führt, ist der katholische Glaube." Cf. IV, 84-85.

[4] Ibid., I, 423-428.

[5] Ibid., 331-332.

[6] Tewtsche Theologey, p. 35: "Also ist der glawb ain anfang der rechtfertigung, aber er macht noch nit gar gerecht."

[7] Werke, II/1, 116. Cf. Carlstadt, KA, p. 39.

Loci Communes he argued that faith was reliance upon the divine mercy promised in Christ.[1] Melanchthon pointed out the error of the "Sophists" with respect to faith: they "call faith assent to those things set forth in Scripture."[2] Melanchthon charged that they understood faith as an intellectual decision. He suggested that faith was an attitude, brought about by God, that involved reliance on the divine promises. If his analysis is correct, then he was calling for a significant reform of theology.

Others also stressed faith--Reuchlin often used the phrase sola fide--but even if they meant the same thing as Luther, their words did not have the same effect.[3] Erasmus said that faith was the only way to approach Christ, but he described faith as human understanding, human knowledge, or human belief about Christ, instead of as a gift of God. In the Enchiridion he wrote:

> Since faith is really the sole approach to Christ, the first rule should be that you understand as clearly as possible about Him and about the Holy Scriptures handed down by His spirit and that you not entertain belief only by lip service--coldly, listlessly, hesitantly, as most Christians do--but let it permeate your whole

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[1] Loci Communes, pp. 177, 184. Latin text in Werke, II/1, 92, 98.

[2] Loci Communes, p. 172. Werke, II/1, 88: "Satis constat vulgus sophistarum fidem vocare assensum eorum, quae scripturis prodita sunt . . . ."

[3] Spitz, "Reuchlin's Philosophy," p. 12: "Faith alone--two words which were about to sound across Europe with a mighty thunder. Reuchlin used them often, but for him they meant a cognitive principle for trans-empirical reality. It was not the faith that moves mountains."

being . . . .[1]

The basic thrust of the piety of Erasmus and Geiler was that the Christian faith was an imitation of the pious and holy life of Christ.

Theologians generally agreed on the importance of God's activity in bringing about faith; however, they defined faith in two different ways. One definition described faith as something a person _does_ and emphasized the content of the Christian faith. Faith meant believing the teachings of the church and imitating the life of Christ. The other definition described faith as something that a person is and emphasized a change in outlook or attitude brought about by God.

4. _Reason_. There was considerable debate over the use of reason in the Christian life. Geiler and Melanchthon illustrate the opposing positions. For Geiler, reason was a valid tool of the Christian because it was the essence of what made man a man.[2] Melanchthon was diametrically opposed. The Christian should pray for freedom from the blindness of human reason and philosophy:

> We must pray that God may transfer our minds from the judgment of human reason and philosophy, to Spiritual judgment. For the blindness of human reason is such that without the light of the Spirit, we cannot know the absolute nature of sin or righteousness. The whole

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[1] _Enchiridion_, p. 85.

[2] _AS_, III, 304. It is interesting to note that Hutten, who strongly supported the Reformation, felt that the solution to the problem facing the church and Germany would be to replace superstition with reason. See _Gesprächbuchlein_, p. 156.

> notion of human reason is darkness. The Spirit of Christ is light, he alone teaches all truth.[1]

Melanchthon's experience had convinced him that philosophy and human reason were incompatible with Christian doctrine.[2] He condemned the use of the rational method on matters of divine truth since it led to error and self-deception.[3]

The validity of the Christian's use of reason was a point of theological disagreement, but in the early years of the Reformation its discussion was not quantitatively significant. It was not one of the more important issues leading to a call for theological reform.

5. Ecclesiology. The fifth theological issue merits a lengthier discussion. In the minds of the participants, ecclesiology was not a major issue in the Reformation; and they did not discuss it at length. However, it is erroneous to conclude that ecclesiology played no role in these early years of the Reformation. Significant differences in the concept of the church did exist, though they must be drawn out by implication. The criticisms and ideas of a reformer like Melanchthon involved a rejection of the concept of the church

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[1] Loci Communes, p. 107. Latin text in Werke, II/1, 38.

[2] Werke, I, 77: "quam non conveniat philosophiae aut humanae rationi cum Christum doctrina."

[3] Werke, I, 95: "Neque enim ex re Christiana fuit, sublimia illa mysteria divinitatis ad rationis methodos vocare, quae labi, errare, falli, circumscribi, capi, verti revertique tam multifariam solet, ut nihil incertius sit, quam, quas putant certissimas, demonstrationes illae meta hysicae, quibus ex caducis et fluxis rebus aeterna colligunt."

held by the Catholic defenders.

In the previous chapter we discussed how some considered the church as an organization which ought to be believed and obeyed because of its God-given authority. The church was the guarantor of the Christian faith. Every individual should submit his opinions to the teaching of the church. When reform was needed, it would come through the structure and ideals of the church. Such a view of the church was unacceptable to the Reformers. What they opposed, however, was not the expression of authority *per se* but the content of what was expressed. They did not deny that the church had authority but differed over how that authority should be expressed (by a pope?) and what that authority should teach.

The church was also the agent or administrator of the sacramental system. By means of the sacraments, the church brought God's grace to man so that he could be justified and live a gracious life.[1] As the Reformation developed, differences between the Reformers and the Catholics with respect to the sacraments of baptism and communion became obvious. However, in these early years the controversy did not center on these two sacraments which, in fact, the Reformers retained.[2]

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[1] See, for example, Pürstinger, *Tewtsche Theologey*, p. 30. According to Fridolin, it is the sacraments, in addition to prayer, that attain, preserve, and increase the life of grace in Christ (Schmidt, p. 43).

[2] On the other hand, they were not completely ignored. Eck, for example, criticized Luther for detracting from the holy sacrament of baptism because he would not say that all sin was taken away by it. See *Gegen Martin Luthers Anklage*

There was considerable criticism of the Catholic sacramental system among the German humanists. They objected to what seemed to them to be a mechanical view of the sacrament which detracted from a personal religious involvement. In most cases they wanted to spiritualize the sacraments.[1] Erasmus distinguished between the material and the spiritual in the sacrament of the altar; the eating of the material elements without the right spiritual attitude was a useless exercise.[2] The sacrament was not taken according to the flesh but according to the spirit. This spiritual reception of the sacrament had as its objective result a changed life.[3]

The humanists were not alone in their desire to personalize the sacramental system. Eck realized that true inner penance meant more than external appearances of repentance.[4] The third of the three levels of repentance which Staupitz delineated was true repentance, a genuine sorrow for one's sin.[5] None of the major representatives of the church

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wider das Konzil von Konstanz, p. 4: "Dannacht wil ich sagen, wie er das heylige sacrament der tauffe vermackelt, indem das er nith wil, das alle sunde durch es abgenommen werke, sunder in dem getaufften kinde auch noch sunde bleybe."

[1] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, pp. 121, 137, 287. It is questionable whether the church actually held the position the humanists ascribed to it. Certainly it did not in its better theology (Cajetan and Eck)--perhaps it did in actual practice.

[2] Praise of Folly, p. 122.

[3] Enchiridion, pp. 109-110.

[4] Defensio, pp. 51, 63.

[5] DS, pp. 16-17.

advocated the kind of mechanical, objective view of the sacraments that the humanists criticized as the dominant position of the church.[1]

Two different battles were going on at the same time. One was between the humanists and what they thought was the materialistic teaching of the church. The other was between the defenders of the church and the Reformers. Here the issue was not so much the interpretation of the mass as it was the place of the priesthood in the church. Thomas Murner recognized revolutionary possibilities inherent in the Reformers' idea of the priesthood of all believers and therefore attacked the concept.[2] In his "Propositions on the Mass" Melanchthon said that "all of us are priests," and "the prayers offered by priests in the mass are no better than the prayers of a layman."[3]

Such a view attacked the concept of the priesthood which was necessary to the Catholic understanding of the church. In matters like the mass and confession, the priesthood was a vital element in the functioning of the church as the administrator of the sacramental system.[1] The necessity of the priesthood to the functioning of the church was particularly true with respect to indulgences, a crucial issue in the outbreak of the Reformation. Eck based the usefulness of indulgences on the ability of the pope to remit the punishment for sins.[2] Geiler recognized the power of the pope to grant a full and complete remission for all sins and indulgence for all temporal punishment.[3] Melanchthon criticized this view of the church as the dispensor of God's forgiveness by satisfaction or indulgences. He preferred to say that sin was forgiven by grace from Christ.[4] The church was not the bishops or the clergy, but the Christian people.[5]

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[1] This does not imply that there were no abuses or perversions of the system. It would be expected that on the local or parish level certain misconceptions might arise which would tend to make the system somewhat more mechanical, and it was these misconceptions against which the critics struggled.

[2] See ADN, pp. 16-17.

[3] Werke, I, 167: "Omnes nos sacerdotes sumus. Orationes sacerdotes in missa nihil praestant laici orationi."

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[1] See, for example, Eck's conditional "yes" to the question "utrum confessio sacerdoti facienda sit homini necessaria ad salutem," in Disputatio Viennae Pannoniae Habita, edited by Therese Virnich ("Corpus Catholicorum," vol. VI; Münster, 1923), pp. 41-42. Geiler argued that just as no hand can put a glove on by itself but needs another hand to help it, so also everyone needs the help of those who possess the power (bishops and the pope) to provide the benefits of indulgences (AS, III, 172). Eck also discussed the way satisfaction may be brought about by the priest (Defensio, p. 76).

[2] Defensio, p. 76. For the debate on indulgences at Leipzig, see Seitz, LD, pp. 171-188. Eck made his opposition to an overstatement of the power of indulgences known at the Leipzig debate: ". . . indulgentias non esse bonorum operum remissiones, sed remissiones esse poenae temporalis pro peccato contritio adhuc debitae et non salutae" (Seitz, LD, p. 177).

[3] AS, III, 3. For Geiler's explanation of the system of merit, see ibid., I, 272-276.

[4] Werke, I, 131: "Hic Lutherus docuit, peccata condonari non satisfactionibus, non indulgentiis, sed gratis a Christo, modo credantur voci Christi absolventis."

[5] Werke, I, 130, 143.

Thus there was a basic difference between Melanchthon's view of the church as Christian people receiving grace and forgiveness from Christ and the view of the church as the administrator of the sacramental system. The respective views of the church resulted in different attitudes toward church reform. On the one hand, reform meant the elimination of abuses and misconceptions so that the system could function properly. On the other hand, it meant a revitalization of the Christian life so that God in Christ became the source of grace and salvation. It was no longer necessary to depend on mediation through a priesthood administering a sacramental system.

These two views of the church cannot be too closely identified with the Catholics and the Reformers respectively. The revitalization of the Christian life without particular emphasis on the sacramental system was a desire of many of the important and popular churchmen of the day. Perhaps the relationship between the advocates of Christian renewal on an individual basis and the Reformers who conceived of the church as the people of God partially accounts for the widespread acceptance of the Reformation.

In conclusion, sentiment for church reform operated on two levels. The first level dealt with the renewal of the Christian life which meant a revitalization of piety and morality in the life of the individual Christian. Erasmus and Geiler represent this approach to ecclesiastical reform. On the basis of the large number of religious books printed during this period, we have concluded that there was a significant desire for church renewal. This first approach to church reform dealt with religious questions on the popular level. It demanded no fundamental change in the structure of the church or its theology. It called upon the people to practice that religion which they already knew. It urged the people to make decisions and commitments on the basis of their religion. They need not concern themselves with complicated theological issues.

The second level of reform concern was predicated upon the assumption that a theological reform of the church was a necessary prerequisite of the renewal of the Christian life. Here the issue is less clear. Many of the charges of corruption in the theology of the church are not substantiated when the major theologians are read. However, there were significant theological differences that at least partially accounted for the Reformation. To some extent, the Reformers successfully took their plea for a theological reform to the people. The depth of the common man's understanding of theological issues is questionable. Perhaps the success of the Reformation was due, in part, to the Reformers' ability to express their desires for theological reform so that the people could understand its impact on their personal religious lives. Theology is often interesting and understandable only to theologians. The genius of the Reformers was that they showed the people how a reformed theology (a subject of little interest) could have impact on their religious experience (a subject of much interest).

Chapter VI

CHURCH REFORM IN LAY SOCIETY

Thus far we have discussed church reform from the viewpoint of humanists and clergymen. Now it is essential to consider the viewpoint of lay society. Three facets of church reform sentiment in lay society require examination: (a) the duties of the Christian prince as the major princes of the empire conceived them, (b) the ecclesiastical reform interests of various elements of the German nation, (c) the relationship between non-religious issues and church reform: the complex intertwining of political, social, economic, nationalistic, and religious concerns.[1] Once more, the procedure is to analyze selected representatives of various points of view.

Historical scholarship has debated the combination of social and religious issues in the course of the Reformation.

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[1] See, for example, Grimm, "Social Forces in the German Reformation," p. 3: "If one examines previous discussions of the interrelation of religious and social phenomena of the Reformation, one finds few guides to a helpful appraisal. Although much has been done, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to trace the religious and the social changes, there still is no satisfactory general study of their interrelation."

William Hitchcock and Guy Swanson represent the argument that social and religious issues merged. Hitchcock points out that social and religious questions interacted in the Reformation.[1] He correctly observes that politics was of little interest to Martin Luther but that in the popular mind political and religious reform went hand in hand.[2] Peasant uprisings began anew in Germany in 1476, and a religious tone colored these movements as it had done other revolts during the Middle Ages.[3] In his Religion and Regime Guy Swanson attempts to explain the connection between social and religious concerns by means of a thesis which "predicts a relation between the nature of a society's central government and its citizens' experience of God's immanence."[4]

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[1] William R. Hitchcock, The Background of the Knights' Revolt, 1522-1523 ("University of California Publications in History," vol. LXI; Berkeley, 1958), p. 1: "The Reformation can be understood only in terms of the interaction of religious thought with contemporary social forces."

[2] Ibid., p. 43.

[3] Schapiro, Social Reform and the Reformation, p. 64.

[4] Religion and Regime: A Sociological Account of the Reformation (Ann Arbor, 1967), pp. 49-50. Several criticisms may be aimed at Swanson's book. Not the least of these is that his interesting thesis is founded almost exclusively on secondary, rather than primary, materials. He presents a complicated hypothesis which is weakened by the exceptions which he himself notes. He does not clearly demonstrate whether the changes in regime brought about the adoption of Protestantism or were parallel developments to the adoption which most of the time come together in interesting coincidence. If he is saying the former, he has a significant hypothesis which is disproved by the exceptions he notes. If he is saying only the latter, his theory loses most, if not all, of its importance. Further, he makes generalizations about theology and religious life of the people which he does not support from the sources.

Two groups of historians deny that social and religious issues combined in the course of the Reformation. Older Protestant historians tended to see the Reformation only in terms of religious issues--the reform of the fallen church.[1] Marxist historians omit religious issues and explain the Reformation in terms of its economic or social causes. The early Marxist historian Engels denied the intertwining of social and religious issues and argued that the struggle only appeared to have religious overtones. In actuality, the classes hid their economic and social demands behind a religious smoke-screen.[2] Because of the involvement of the church in the feudal system, attacks upon the system appeared to be attacks upon the church. The critics had to deprive the system of its religious justification before it could be changed.[3]

It is clear that both religious and non-religious elements were involved in the success of the Reformation. For the present, the precise relationship between these two kinds of forces remains indistinct.[1] The impreciseness arises, in part, from the fact that the religious movements were also political and social movements.[2] Since the movements were religious as well as political and social, the motivation of the territorial princes as they decided whether to support or oppose the new religious movement was mixed.[3] Because the impetus behind the movement varied widely, it is incorrect to imply that the victory of the Reformation was solely due to the theological or religious superiority of the Reformers.[4]

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[1] For example, Mosheim and Singmaster, cited in chapter one.

[2] Friedrich Engels, The German Revolutions, edited by Leonard Krieger ("Classic European Historians"; Chicago, 1967), p. 34: "If the class struggles of that time appear to bear religious earmarks, if the interests, requirements and demands of the various classes hid themselves behind a religious screen, it little changes the actual situation, and is to be explained by conditions of the time."

[3] Ibid., p. 35: "It is obvious that under such conditions, all general and overt attacks on feudalism, in the first place attacks on the church, all revolutionary, social and political doctrines, necessarily became theological heresies. In order to be attacked, existing social conditions had to be stripped of their aureole of sanctity."

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[1] Bezold, "Die 'armen Leute,' " p. 1: "Denn einmal waren die geistliche und die weltliche Seite der bestehenden Ordnung nicht scharf abgegrenzt." See also Hans von Schubert, Revolution und Reformation. Ein Vortrag ("Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte," vol. CXXVIII; Tübingen, 1927), p. 11: "Die Hauptsache für uns: auch wo man Geistliches und Weltliches scharf schied, die Religion schied man nicht von sozialen Fragen, aber die Verbindung war höchst unklar."

[2] Paul Böckmann, "Der gemeine Mann in den Flugschriften der Reformation," Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, XXII (1944), 198: ". . . in diesen ersten Jahren der Reformation geht es nicht einseitig um Fragen des Glaubens und der Lehre, sondern jeder theologische Streitpunkt führt tief hinein in die Grundstruktur des gesamten politischen und sozialen Daseins und berührt tatsächlich das Volksleben in all seinen Gestaltungen. Die religiöse Bewegung ist damals von sich aus schon eine soziale und politische."

[3] Grimm, "Social Forces in the German Reformation," pp. 7, 9.

[4] Ranke was perhaps the first to note the help that political events and conditions gave to the Reformation. See History of the Reformation, p. 154: "Let us not forget to remark, however, that as the abuse complained of had a double character, religious and political, or financial, so also political events came in aid of the opposition emanating from religious ideals." More recently, Bernd Moeller has cited the union of religious, social, and economic reform demands in the victory of the Reformation. See his Reichstadt und

This chapter investigates these issues in a limited way since a thorough examination would require a lengthy study in itself. It suggests the path such a complete study might take and examines the viewpoint of selected representatives of the various parts of lay society.

A. The Duties of the Christian Prince

In the early sixteenth century church and state remained closely tied together. Writers generally assumed that rulers were Christian princes and as such had both political and religious duties. Erasmus emphasized the religious duties of a Christian prince,[1] and Geiler believed that wise princes were a blessing for the lands they ruled and were pillars of both church and state.[2] Hutten encouraged three qualities in

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Reformation ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. CLXXX; Gütersloh, 1962), p. 22: "Die Verbindung der reformatorischen Forderungen mit sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Reformwünschen hat den Sieg der Reformation also vielerorts eher gehemmt als beschleunigt." See also p. 34: "der Sieg der Reformation ist mehr als das Resultat theologischer Denkaktionen."

[1] See below p. 227.

[2] AS, II, 256: "Weise Fürsten sind ein wahrer Segen für das Land, welches sie regieren. Sie sind Säulen des Staates und die Kirche, ja sie gleichen jener Feuersäule, welche den Kindern Israels bei ihrem Auszuge aus Agypten vorangegangen ist: sie erleuchten, führen und schützen ihre Völker auf dem Wege des Heiles." Of course, Geiler admitted that some princes led their people not to blessing, but to ruin: "Es giebt aber auch thörichte Fürsten, Oberhäupter von Staaten und Städten, weltliche und geistliche Regenten, welche zum Verderben der Völker regieren" (ibid.).

a true Christian prince: seriousness, unity, and compassion.[1]

In this period a strong emperor would have revitalized the empire and the German nation and led them to a position of real strength and leadership. However, neither Maximilian nor Charles could do so.[2] Maximilian lacked the perseverance to complete the many noteworthy pursuits he began.[3] Between the French, the Turks, and the pope, Charles did not have the time nor the energy left to pursue the ecclesiastical problem in Germany with the attention it required.[4]

1. The religious duties of the Christian prince. The princes themselves (Maximilian and Charles) and their contemporaries recognized that the Christian prince had certain religious responsibilities. The sources frequently mention four such responsibilities.

a. Defend and protect the church. By a wide margin, the religious duty most frequently assigned to the Christian prince was the defense and protection of the church from its internal and external enemies. Bishop Pürstinger criticized kings for misusing the power God had given them for the purpose of defending the church and the people.[1] According to Murner, the emperor should be the maintainer of the Christian faith, the protector of the pope, the proponent of noble causes, and the defender of the Catholic church.[2]

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[1] Gesprächbuchlein, pp. 155, 107, 63-64.

[2] Ranke, History of the Reformation, p. 158: "Had there been at this moment a powerful emperor he might have turned these agitations to vast account. Supported by the nation, he would have been able to revive the ancient opposition to the papacy, and to inspire his people with a new life founded upon religious ideas."

[3] Glenn Elwood Waas, The Legendary Character of Kaiser Maximilian ("Columbia University Germanic Studies," n. s. vol. XIV; New York, 1941), pp. 6, 8, 63.

[4] Karl Brandi, The Emperor Charles V: The Growth and Destiny of a Man and of a World Empire, translated by C.V. Wedgwood (London, 1939), pp. 149-154.

This defense and protection of the church was important to Charles and the German people. His "Wahlkapitulation" begins with a statement of obligation to protect Christendom, the pope, and the church.[3] Charles considered himself as the "Vogt" of the church as German emperors before him had done for over one hundred years.[4] He believed that the church and Christian unity were threatened by three enemies: France, the Lutherans, and the Turks. Only a strong emperor who was willing to put aside personal ambition could repel them.[5]

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[1] Onus ecclesiae, p. 31: "Omnes forme principes terrae in maligno positi cum Babylonica meretrice fornicantur."

[2] Maurice Gravier, Luther et l'opinion publique: Essai sur la littérature satirique et polémique en langue allemande pendant les années décisives de la réforme (1520-1530) ("Cahiers de l'institut d'études germaniques," vol. II; Paris, 1943), p. 133.

[3] Fritz Hartung, "Die Wahlkapitulation der deutschen Kaiser und Könige," Historische Zeitschrift, CVII (1911), 325.

[4] Ingetraut Ludolphy, Die Voraussetzungen der Religionspolitik Karls V ("Arbeiten zur Theologie," Reihe I, Hft. 24; Stuttgart, 1965), p. 9.

[5] Peter Rassow, Die politische Welt Karls V (2d ed.; München, 1950), pp. 22-23. The ironic thing is that Charles appeared to have been willing to put aside all personal ambition except for his desire to lead a unified Christendom--an ambition which was not to be fulfilled.

Pope Leo agreed that the two main opponents of the church were the Turks and the heretics. In his correspondence with Francis I, Leo expressed his fear of an impending calamity which might befall the church from the east.[1] In a letter to his daughter, Marguerite, Maximilian expressed his desire for universal peace and action against the Turks.[2] In his call for the Reichstag at Augsburg in 1518 he requested help in rescuing the holy faith from the Turks.[3] Maximilian's interest in the Turkish problem was also revealed in his letter to King Sigmund I written from Augsburg on September 14, 1518.[4] Charles was convinced that Christian princes should lead the fight against the Turks and believed that God had called him to the imperial power so that the church could return to its former brilliance.[1]

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[1] Négociations de la France dans le Levant; ou, Correspondances, mémoires et actes diplomatiques des ambassadeurs de France, edited by Ernest Charrière (4 vols.; "Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France"; Paris, 1848-1860), I, 29: "Sepe significavimus majestati tuae quid ab immanissimo Turcarum tyranno universae fidei nostrae calamitatis et periculi nobis videretur impendere . . . ."

[2] André Joseph Ghislain Le Glay (ed.), Correspondance de l'empereur Maximilien Ier et de Marguerite d'Autriche de 1507 à 1519 (2 vols.; "Société de l'histoire de France," publications no. 16-17; Paris, 1839), II, 340: "pour démonstrer le fervent désir et zèle qu'avons à la paix universelle et emprinse contre les infidèles." Hereafter cited as Le Glay.

[3] J.K.F. Knaake, "Acta Augustana 1518," Jahrbücher des deutschen Reichs und des deutschen Kirche im Zeitalter der Reformation, I (1872), 186: "und daraus ain ausstregliche Hilff wider die Turken zu rettung unsers heiligen glaubens volgen mug . . . ."

[4] Xavier Liske, "Zur Geschichte des Augsburger Reichstages 1518," Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte, XVIII (1878), 640. Maximilian's favorite symbol to characterize his crusade against the Turks was St. George. See Rudolf Buchner, Maximilian I, Kaiser an der Zeitenwende ("Persönlichkeit und Geschichte," vol. XIV; Göttingen, 1959), p. 51.

Feelings were equally strong that the other major enemy of the church, the heretics, must be defeated as well. Pope Leo expressed his fear of the enemies of the Catholic faith and sought the help of France against them.[2] Maximilian urged the diet to turn its attention to the "unbelievers."[3] Charles' conviction that God had established him as emperor to overcome the enemies of the church was as strong with respect to the heretics as it was with respect to the Turks.[4] He condemned Luther for opposing the historical tradition of Christianity: "If this man has some practice to propose to restore the discipline of the holy catholic church we wish to effect it, but if he persists in attacking this faith which we

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1. Hermann Baumgarten, Karl V. und die deutsche Reformation ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. XXVII; Halle, 1889), p. 10.

2. Négociations, edited by Charrière, pp. 63-64: "Leo episcopus, servus servorum Dei, ad futuram rei memoriam: Considerantes ac animo revolventes generale concilium, permissione divina, a felicis recordationis Julio papa II, predecessore nostro, indictum fuisse ea potissimum causa ut depravati Christi fidelium mores in melius reformarentur, ac pax universalis ecclesiae daretur, necnon unio et concordia inter reges et principes christianos iniretur, ut tandem sancta ac pernecessaria contra catholice fidei hostes expeditio suscipi posset . . . ."

3. Knaake, "Acta Augustana," p. 184.

4. Baumgarten, Karl V, p. 10.

and our ancestors have professed he ought to be condemned."[1]

b. Reform and correct the church. There was some feeling that the emperor should take part in the reform or correction of the church when it lost its way. However, this conviction was not so widely expressed as the first.

Melanchthon called upon the prince (the "praecipuum membrum Ecclesiae") to lend the support of the secular arm to the reform of the church.[2] In 1521 he urged the Christian princes to remember their duty and oppose the tyranny of the antichrist.[3] In his Propositions on the Mass (1521) he wrote: "The abuse of the mass ought to be abolished by the magistrates."[4] Thus Melanchthon was willing and axious for the princes to take part in the reform of the church. One suspects that Melanchthon realized that the success of reform depended in part upon the assistance of the political leaders.

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[1] Quoted by Jean Babelon, Charles-Quint (1500-1558) (Paris, 1947), p. 240: "Si cet homme a quelque chose de pratique à proposer pour restaurer la discipline de la sainte Eglise, nous désirons l'exécuter, mais s'il persiste à attaquer cette foi que nous et nos ancêtres professons et avons professée, il doit être condamné." See Deutsche Reichstagsakten, Jüngere Reihe (7 vols.; Gotha, 1901 ff), II, 595-596.

[2] In Corpus Reformatorum (28 vols.; Halle, Braunschweig, Berlin, and Leipzig, 1834 ff), XXI, 1012: "Ostendi pertinere emendationem Ecclesiarum ad magistratus officium . . . valde errant principes, si hanc curam non pertinere ad se arbitrantur."

[3] Melanchthon, Werke, I, 116: "Vel tandem recordamini, vos et Christianos esse et principes Christiani populi, et ab Antichristi tyrannide miseras Christianismi reliquias asserite."

[4] Ibid., p. 166: "Abusus missae per magistratus tolli debet."

Hutten sought the help of the prince in improving the church and expected Charles to see that the morals of the clergy were improved. Idleness, laziness, unchasteness, vanity, and avarice were qualities which Charles might well eliminate from the "shameful, dishonourable lives" of the clergy.[1]

Erasmus stressed the important role of the prince in church and society. For example, he devoted a book to the *Education of a Christian Prince*. However, he did not comment extensively on the role of the prince in ecclesiastical reform. He discussed the duties and responsibilities of the Christian prince but did not emphasize the duty of the prince to reform the church. Perhaps he feared a takeover of the church by a prince to whom its reform had been entrusted.

An interesting question comes to mind at this point. Why was the prince generally considered to be on the side of the church--its protector rather than its reformer? The long antagonism between church and state could have provided an opportunity for the prince to assert his authority over the church, cloaking his assertion in the sentiment for church reform.[1] But the emperors did not take advantage of the situation to use church reform as a means of solidifying their political control. Maximilian was tempted to set up a German national church on the model of the Pragmatic Sanction of France but was dissuaded from any radical action by Wimpfeling.[2] Charles was not averse to reform endeavors but felt his first duty was to protect the church from its enemies and to preserve peace and order. Neither Maximilian nor Charles was completely satisfied with the papacy, but they had neither the power nor the inclination to revolt against the church. They refused to take part in any reform of the church which involved disruption or disobedience. One can only imagine the results if the reformers had had the help of a strong emperor behind their endeavors.

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[1] Hutten, *Gesprächbuchlein*, p. 65: "er sie von dem Müssiggang, von der Trägheit, der Unkeuschheit, Völlerei, Eitelkeit und ihrem bösen Leben ablenke und sie Priester sein heisse, die allein geistlichen Dinge pflegen und sich der weltlichen ganz entschlagen; dass er sie anweise, nicht aus der Geistlichkeit eine Täuschung zu machen, noch allein auf Gewinn zu denken; dass er ihre Unkeuschheit auslösche und ihr schändlich, unehrbar Leben bessere."

c. Secure and preserve the peace. The emperor's responsibility also included securing and preserving the peace. Erasmus had a fervent desire for peace; and, therefore, it is not surprising that he saw the preservation of peace as one of the prince's main responsibilities. The major princes of Europe gave Erasmus cause for optimism. In 1516 he wrote to Capito praising the efforts for peace by Francis I, Henry VIII, Maximilian, and Prince Charles who had "set all their warlike preparations aside and established peace upon solid, and, as I trust, adamantine foundations . . . ."[1] The example of Christ revealed to the prince how he should rule as a Christian:

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[1] However, this does not appear to have happened frequently in the Reformation. For a territorial prince to become Protestant actually involved the political risk of incurring the opposition of Charles V.

[2] See above pp. 79-80.

> I pray thee, O thou Christian prince, if thou be truly a Christian, behold the image of thy Prince. Observe and mark how he entered into his Kingdom, how he proceeded, how He would have thee to rule: marry (indeed), that peace and concord might be the sum and conclusion of all thy care and rule.[2]

The Christian prince "should be as different from even the noble pagan princes as a Christian is from a pagan."[3] The teachings of Christ should be thoroughly rooted in the mind of the prince so that they influence his decisions: "He should be taught that the teachings of Christ apply to no one more than to the prince."[4] Bishop Pürstinger saw it as the work of the devil that Christian princes engaged so frequently in warfare.[5] We have already cited Maximilian's desire for "universal peace."[6] Charles V also saw clearly his responsibility to the people to preserve a peaceful order.[7]

d. Raise the level of morality. An earlier chapter discussed the moralism of the humanist, Jacob Wimpfeling. He believed that one of the tasks of the emperor was to protect the church from the rebels, murderers, and robbers who damaged the reputation of the church by their immorality and who lacked any sense of shame or guilt for their misdeeds.[1] Following the example of Constantine or Theodosius, the prince should serve God and lead his people to a higher morality through a better knowledge of the laws of God.[2] Wimpfeling suggested that Maximilian had an opportunity to be a hero to the German people. By eliminating impiety, he would become a true liberator of the German nation.[3] Maximilian should imitate those who combined mercy and justice, who respected the pope, honored the church, and loved the clergy.[4] A good Christian prince was himself a moral person and was devoted to the Christian faith and to the church.[1]

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[1] *Epistles of Erasmus*, II, 506. Allen, II, 488: "funditus recisis bellorum seminariis pacem solidis et, uti spero, adamantinis vinculis astrinxisse." For more praise of Charles V, see Allen, II, 289.

[2] Erasmus, *Complaint of Peace*, p. 20.

[3] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, p. 152.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

[5] *Onus ecclesiae*, p. 18.

[6] See Le Glay, II, 340.

[7] Brandi, *Charles V*, p. 494.

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[1] Wimpfeling, ALF, p. 522: "Praeterea opus habet Caesarea maiestas, pecuniis, ad comprimendos imperio rebelles, & ad exterminandos sicarios atque latrones, quorum nonnulli ecclesiis nocere, earum bona diripere, immo in clericorum personas saevire atque grassari non erubsecunt."

[2] Wimpfeling, Pädogogische Schriften, p. 332.

[3] Wimpfeling, ALF, p. 526: "Si Caesar hanc impietatem enervaverit, si Germaniam tributo gravi oppressam, in pristinam libertatem vendicaverit, si doctis & honestis ad praebendas aditum fecerit, tum vere liberator Germaniae, libertatisque restitutor, tum vere pater patriae perpetuo ab omnibus passim poterit appellari, nec minorem sibi gloriam Germaniaeque fructum afferet, quam si provinciam aliquam bellicis ei viribus adiecisset."

[4] Ibid., p. 394: "Tu quoque, o Maximiliane, gloriosissime victoriosissimeque Regum imitare . . . qui semper clementissimi, iustissimique suere, . . . Romanos pontifices coluit, ecclesiam honoravit, clerumque magnopere dilexit."

2. *Political duties*. The Christian commitment of a prince also affected his political duties and responsibilities. The secular aspects of the prince's rule derived their authority from the Christian faith.

a. Order (*Ordnung*). The *Reformation of Emperor Sigismund* strongly emphasized the responsibility of the emperor to bring order to the empire: "The emperor is God's instrument, he brings God's order to power."[2] Bishop Pürstinger expressed a similar view and criticized rulers who acted in their own "*utile peculiare*" instead of for the "*bonum publicum*."[3] Both authors commented on the emperor's important responsibilities to the whole nation to preserve order and to work for the common good.

b. Nationalism and the empire. Hutten's nationalism was evident when he lectured Charles V about his responsibilities to renew the empire and restore the Germans to their proper place in the respect of the other peoples of Europe. Charles would win the praise of everyone by restoring German freedom.[1] Hutten urged Charles to assert himself in demanding his rights from the pope remembering that he was a king and a German.[2] The hopes of Germany awaited fulfillment if only Charles would test the people's will to fight for liberation from the Roman yoke. Weak submission to papal authority was incompatible with Hutten's understanding of the nature and character of the German people:

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[1] Joseph Knepper, *Nationaler Gedanke und Kaiseridee bei den elsässischen Humanisten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschtums und der politischen Ideen im Reichslande* ("Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen zu Janssens Geschichte des deutschen Volkes," vol. I; Freiburg im Breisgan, 1898), p. 232.

[2] Quoted by Dohna, *Reformatio Sigismundi*, p. 112: "Der Kaiser ist Gottes Werkzeug, er bringt die Ordnung Gottes zu Kraft."

[3] *Onus ecclesiae*, p. 31.

> Fulfill at last the hopes of Germany to which you have committed yourself. Allow no doubt of justice to arise . . . . Has Germany then deserved to perish with you instead of for you? Lead us into open danger, war and conflagration. All nations may work against us, all peoples may fall upon us. We would rather test our power in danger than in this unmanly fashion to lie down like women and be slaves. And we hoped that you would liberate us from the Roman yoke.[3]

Hutten even went so far as to compare Charles' betrayal of the German people to the treachery of Sinon who convinced the Trojans to pull the famous horse into the city.[4]

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, p. 115: "Ja, und dass ihn jedermann begrüsse als einen wiederbringer der deutschen Freiheit und ihm, wo er wandelt, nachrufe: du allerstarkmütigster, du allergerechtester, du allerfreiester Kaiser! ihn nenne den rechtgeistlichen und wahren christlichen Herrscher."

[2] Ibid., p. 104: "Was anders, als dass Karl von dem Papst dagegen sein Recht fordern und daran gedenken wird, dass er ein König und ein Deutscher sei?"

[3] Quoted by Holborn, Hutten, pp. 168-169. The text is in Opera, II, 38ff. See Gesprächbuchlein, p. 84, for more on the expectations that were held for Charles: "O Zeit! O Sitten! Soll dem edeln Jüngling, von dem jedermann alles Gute erwartet, eine solche Gewalt widerfahren?"

[4] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 85: "Freiwillig hat er diese Gesandtschaft übernommen; seine Absicht ist keine andre gewesen als die des Sinon, von dem Virgil schreibt: 'Mit freien Muts Beständigkeit/Zu zwiefachem Entschluss bereit:/ Dem andern zu bereiten Not,/Wenn nicht, zu gehen in den Tod.' "

c. Universal sovereignty. There were some differences of opinion over whether the universal sovereignty of the emperor extended to the church. The Kolmar Revolutionary espoused the opinion that secular authority could at times be exercised over the church. The author proposed a program of caesaropapism which conferred on the emperor the fullest authority both in worldly and ecclesiastical matters.[1] Loyal churchmen could not agree with this position.[2] Despite his interest in improvement of the ecclesiastical situation, Wimpfeling made it clear that he ultimately subordinated the prince to the church. The pope was the final authority, and the Emperor should fear apostolic censure which the pope would not hesitate to use should the prince overstep his rightful limits.[3] The prince must be obedient both to God and to the church. He could not tax the church without prior papal approval and should do nothing to impinge on the freedom of the church.[4]

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[1] Knepper, Nationaler Gedanke, p. 283: "Der Kolmarer Revolutionär hat einen durchaus papstfeindlichen Standpunkt, und sein System ist ein direct cäsaropapistisches; ohne an den Primat selbst zu rütteln, entwickelt der Autor seine Ansichten ganz in der Richtung eines Programms, das dem Kaiser die weitgehendsten Befugnisse nicht nur in rein weltlichen, sondern auch in kirchlichen Dingen zuerkennt."

[2] Ibid., pp. 255, 275.

[3] Wimpfeling, ALF, p. 525: "Timeat Caesarea Maiestas censuras apostolicos, a quibus sanctissimus Dom. noster Papa non abstinebit."

[4] Wimpfeling, Pädagogische Schriften, pp. 332, 347.

The Reformation of Emperor Sigismund left control of the church in the hands of the ecclesiastics. However, if ecclesiastical officers neglected their duties, then the secular prince could act. The document argued for the empire's independence from the church because the empire was an aspect of Christianity and not of the church. Thus the political manifestation of Christianity was the empire (and not the church). At the same time, the church and empire shared the same goals; and, therefore, it was impossible to distinguish sharply between them.[1]

The Oberrheinische Revolutionär argued that the superior power in both worldly and ecclesiastical matters belonged to the emperor. In the emperor's hands "resides all power. It is a sword sent from heaven to limit both sides. It sought to reproach both spiritual and worldly orders. For that reason, his imperial majesty has the power to put in place and to remove a pope . . . ."[2] Maximilian gave implicit approval to this view when he stated that "the Papacy is a function which should be held with the Empire."[3] However, Maximilian lacked the courage or the inclination to put this theoretical view into practice.

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[1] Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, pp. 130-131, 153.

[2] Oberrheinische Revolutionär, edited by Hermann Haupt, p. 158: "stott aller gewalt. im (ist) ein schwert von himel gesant, zu beiden siten schniden, daz ist beid geischlich und weltlich stend sollende straffen. darum sin kaiserliche majestat het macht, ein babest zu setzen und zu endsetzen . . . ." Hereafter cited as OR.

[3] Quoted by Christopher Hare (pseudonym Marian Andrews), Maximilian the Dreamer (London, 1913), p. 167. Later in this chapter we will mention the unusual method by which Maximilian thought he could implement this theory.

d. Religious foundation. This distinction between religious and political duties of a sixteenth century prince is somewhat artificial. Even the most politically self-interested acts of the prince were given religious sanction and authority. When we discuss their interests in church reform, we shall see that Maximilian and Charles were religious men. They acted not only out of a desire to extend their political power but also out of a sense of moral, if not religious, duty.[1]

B. Ecclesiastical Reform Interest in Lay Society

1. Princes. Political factors played an important role in the development of the Reformation. Without the support of some princes (Frederick the Wise, e.g.) and the indecisiveness or inability of others (Charles V), the Reformation would not have taken the course it did. Consideration of the significant expressions of reform sentiment in lay society in the early sixteenth century must include the princes whose opinions and actions were so crucially important.

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1. For example, Brandi, Charles V, pp. 15-16: "For him the dynastic principle did not merely mean the theory of hereditary kingship for the permanent security of the state; it was also a profound moral, almost a religious duty."

a. Maximilian. Scholars have differed about the depth of Maximilian's religious feelings and convictions. Shortly before the turn of the twentieth century Bruno Gebhardt suggested that Maximilian had little interest in church reform and was guided only by political considerations.[1] The correspondence of Maximilian and Marguerite reveals little about Maximilian's personal religion and almost no indication of his desire for ecclesiastical reform.[2] Hare disagrees with those who deny Maximilian's religiosity: "In the midst of all this corruption around him, we can truly say that Maximilian was a deeply religious man, full of zeal and piety in his devotions, and honestly anxious to promote the good of his people in every way."[3]

Maximilian gave several indications of his interest in church reform. The evidence suggests that he carefully considered joining Louis XII in a rebellion against Julius II in order to bring about far-reaching reformation of the Catholic church.[4] The prospects of this coalition worried the pope and some of the cardinals.[1] A letter from Maximilian to Marguerite in June 1510 revealed his views on ecclesiastical conditions in Rome:

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[1] Die gravamina der Deutschen Nation gegen den römischen Hof (Breslau, 1895), p. 89. Such a view has been held more recently by Waas, The Legendary Character of Kaiser Maximilian, who makes practically no mention of Maximilian's concern for church reform.

[2] Le Glay edition, passim.

[3] Maximilian, p. 221.

[4] For summaries of the evidence, see ibid., p. 217, and Ranke, History of the Reformation in Germany, pp. 122-123.

> That cursed priest, the Pope, will not on any account suffer us to go in arms to Rome for our Imperial Crown, in company with the French, as he fears to be called before a Council by both of us, for the great sins and abuses which he and his predecessors have committed and daily commit, and also some Cardinals who fear reformation which they sorely need.[2]

Maximilian's correspondence with King Sigmund I gives further evidence of his interest in church reform.[3] In addition, Maximilian showed his desire for reform in the traditional sense, when, in 1511, he called for a council to bring about ecclesiastical changes.[4]

Like many other princes, Maximilian felt that the religious questions were not for him to decide as emperor and thus was not inclined to participate directly in the religious debates of his day.[1] He opposed the abuses that were present in ecclesiastical life; but political developments, particularly in foreign affairs, took the largest part of his attention. Art, education, religion, and internal politics were all of lesser importance in his mind.[2] For example, Maximilian's report to King Sigmund I mentioned his grievances against the church but dealt mainly with the proposed Turkish expedition.[3]

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[1] Ulmann, "Maximilians Plan einer deutschen Kirchenreform," p. 203, and Le Glay, I, 294.

[2] Quoted by Hare, Maximilian, pp. 217-218. See Le Glay, I, 294: "le maudit preter pape pour nulle chose du monde peult souvrir que nous alions en armes pour nostre coron imperial à Rome, accompaingné des Françoes; car yl creint d'y estre chapitré de nous deos, veu ses grans piechiés et abusions que ly et ses prédécesseurs ont fait et font journelement et aussy aulcuns cardinauls, lesquels crindont tourtous le réformation . . . ."

[3] See his report to Sigmund in Liske, "Geschichte des Augsburger Reichstages," p. 641: "cardinales ac totum clerum ad debitum christianae religioni statum reformare ac reducere conaremur," and p. 645: "Commemoratis deinde gravaminabus, quae a sede apostolica sustinent, et reformatione petita."

[4] Leopold von Ranke, Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation (6 vols.; Munich, 1839-1847), I, 166-168.

Maximilian's contact with Jacob Wimpfeling tempered his interest and activity in church reform.[4] Wimpfeling's conservative advice included this admonition:

> In any case the emperor should do nothing without the

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[1] Hare, Maximilian, p. 216: "While the whole of Germany was roused and startled by these theological discussions--for through the printing press the famous theses had spread far and wide--Maximilian himself played no part in the religious movement, which he seems to have felt was beyond his sphere." Léonard, The Reformation, p. 30, believes that Maximilian shared the feeling about the need for reform but was constrained somewhat by what he considered to be his responsibilities as emperor.

[2] W. Winker, Kaiser Maximilian I. zwischen wirklichkeit und Traum (Munich, 1950), p. 320. Cf. Buchner, Maximilian, p. 52: "Auswärtige Politik und Kriegführung waren des Kaisers Lebenselemente, alles übrige--Kunst, Wissenschaft, Religion, Selbst Verwaltung und Reichspolitik--bei all seiner Aufgeschlossenheit doch nur Beigaben geringeren Gewichts."

[3] Liske, "Geschichte des Augsburger Reichstages," pp. 642-648.

[4] For a discussion of this incident, see Gebhardt, Die gravamina der Deutschen Nation, pp. 77-89, though it should be noted that Gebhardt plays down the influence Wimpfeling exercised on Maximilian. See p. 89: "Maximilians Politik wurde durch Wimphelings Gutachten nicht im geringsten beeinflusst und wäre wohl auch durch energischere Vorschläge kaum verändert worden."

> willingness of the spiritual princes, and be on guard lest the mendicants stir the people up against him, lest the pope order the election of a counter-emperor, his subjects released from their obedience turn against him, his neighbors called out against him, and apostolic censure used against him . . . ."[1]

Due either to Wimpfeling's conservative advice or to a change in the political situation, Maximilian decided to become the pope's ally; and, for the time, reform was forgotten.[2]

The most intriguing aspect of Maximilian's relationship to the church was his abortive plan to elevate himself to the papacy. Perhaps as early as 1507, and certainly by 1511, Maximilian decided that the moment was right to unite the empire and the church in one person.[3] He seriously intended to extend his personal influence and improve the ecclesiastical situation, but historians have been critical of his plan.[4] The most solid evidence for Maximilian's intention is a letter, written to his daughter Marguerite on September 18, 1511, which said in part:

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[1] Quoted by ibid., p. 87: "Jedenfalls solle der Kaiser nichts ohne den Willen der geistlichen Kurfürsten thun, und solle sich nur hüten, dass nicht die Mendicanten das Volk gegen ihn aufreizten, dass nicht der Papst die Wahl eines Gegenkönigs anbefehle, seine Unterthanen vom Gehorsam gegen ihn entbinde, seine Nachbarn gegen ihn aufrufe, die apostolischen Censuren anwende . . . ."

[2] So goes the interpretation of Hare, Maximilian, p. 219.

[3] Gebhardt, Die gravamina der Deutschen Nation, p. 80, and Aloys Schulte, Kaiser Maximilian I. als Kandidat für den päpstlichen Stuhl (1511) (Leipzig, 1906), p. 77.

[4] Schulte, Maximilian als Kandidat, p. 73, calls it "ein absurder Plan!" Winker, Kaiser Maximilian, p. 224, refers to it as a "phantastischen Plänen."

> Very dear and much beloved daughter . . . we send tomorrow Monsieur de Gurce, bishop, to Rome to the Pope to find some way in which we can agree with him to take us as a coadjutor, in order that after his death we may be assured of having the papacy, and become a priest and after that a saint, so that it will be a necessity that after my death you will be constrained to adore me, which will be much glory for me . . . . I am sending a post to the King of Aragon to beg that he will help us to arrive at this . . . . I begin also to work upon the Cardinals, with whom two or three hundred thousand ducats will do me good service . . . . I beg you to keep this matter entirely secret, although I fear that in a few days all the world will have to know it, for it is not possible to work so great a matter secretly, with so many people working . . . and so much money . . . . I commend you to God. Written by the hand of your good father Maximilianus, future pope . . . .[1]

Marguerite's response indicated that she did not favor her father's proposal. She expressed her anxiety over the effects of such an action on the entire Christian world and over the spiritual dangers into which he might lead the church.[2] The two fundamental conditions for the success of the plan were the early death of the pope and the financial assistance of the Fuggers.[1] Without question, Maximilian's motivation in this project was certainly mixed, but his correspondence revealed sincere religious conviction behind his plan to become pope as well as emperor.[2]

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[1] Quoted by Hare, Maximilian, pp. 166-167. The text for the letter is in Le Glay, II, 37-39. Note especially II, 38: "Et envoyons demain monsieur de Gurce, évesque, à Rome devers le pape pour trouver fachon que nous puyssons accorder avec luy de nous prenre pour ung coadjuteur, affin que après sa mort pour uns estre assuré de avoer le papat et devenir prester et après estre sainct, et que il vous sera de nécessité que, après ma mort, vous serés contraint de me adorer dont je me trouveré bien gloryoes," and II, 39: "Le roy d'Aragon a mandé à son ambaxadeur que yl veult commander aux cardinaulx espaingnos que yl veulent favoryser le papat à nous."

[2] Winker, Kaiser Maximilian, p. 225, provides a German translation of Marguerite's response: "Ich befinde mich in grosser quälender Unruhe und möchte meinen kaiserlichen Herrn Vater tausendmal liber als Gemahl der englischen Prinzessin denn als Papst sehen, und es würde damit die christliche Welt nicht in Gefahr kommen, in ihren Grundfesten zu erzittern und der Stuhl Petri nicht ein schwankendes Schiff auf hoher See werden, auf dem sich mein von tausend Gefahren der Seele und des Leibes umgebener Vater befindet."

b. Charles V. Although he did not become emperor until 1519, very late in the period under our discussion, Charles is so significant that his religious convictions and his interest in ecclesiastical reform must be included.[3] His "profession of faith" indicated that Charles was a loyal son of the church and was an orthodox Christian: "I believe in my heart and confess by my mouth all that the church our mother believes and witnesses to us and what a good Christian is required to believe."[4] This confession is remarkable for the depth of religion it expressed. He affirmed his reliance on the grace and mercy of God and denied any ability to save himself:

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[1] Schulte, Maximilian als Kandidat, p. 79. Schulte also gives the text of Maximilian's letter to Paul von Liechtenstein expressing his desire to become pope and including something of the expected financial arrangements (pp. 15-19).

[2] Not everyone would, however, agree with this interpretation. Schulte, Maximilian als Kandidat, pp. 79-80, denies that Maximilian had any religious interests in the papacy.

[3] Harold Grimm suggests that Charles "approached his multitudinous tasks with youthful vigor, dogged persistence, and exceptional ability, and developed his plan for establishing a dynastic empire which would make him not only the guardian of the peace of all Europe, but the political champion of a universal church reformed along Erasmian lines" (The Reformation Era, p. 120).

[4] Quoted by Babelon, Charles-Quint, p. 347: "Je crois de tout coeur, et je confesse par ma bouche tout ce que l'Eglise notre mère croit et enseigne de vous, et qu'un bon chrétien est tenu de croire."

> I beseech you, Savior, to grant me three things: the first is that you have mercy on me and that you pardon the numerous and serious sins which I have committed against your commandments and your will. The second is that it may please you to give me the grace to be able to serve you and to fulfill your commandments without falling into mortal sin. The third is that at the hour of my death and my last moments you will help me and give me the grace to recall your very holy passion, and to have contrition for my sins so that I would be able to die within your holy faith and finally to enjoy eternal glory with your saints. My God and my redeemer, I confess at this hour that, relying upon your help and grace, I will abstain from sin, and I promise to love you, and no more to offend you. I beseech you to protect and confirm me in this purpose, my God and glorifier, and I promise to confess you better that I would have been able, according to your commandments and those of the church. I beseech you, by reverence of your blessed death and sad passion, that by virtue of the prayers of the sweet virgin Mary, you will deign to pardon all my sins and to defend me against the enemy at the hour of my death, and to guide me to eternal glory. Amen.[1]

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[1] Babelon, Charles-Quint, pp. 347-348: "Je vous supplie, Seigneur, de m'accorder trois choses: la première est que vous ayez miséricorde de moi, et que vous m'accordiez le pardon des nombreux et graves péchés que j'ae commis contre vos commandements et votre volonté. La seconde est qu'il vous plaise de me donner la grâce de pouvoir vous servir et d'accomplir vos commandements sans tomber dans le péché mortel. La troisième est qu'à l'heure de ma mort et de mes dernières necessités vous veuillez me secourir et me donner la grâce de me rappeler votre très sainte passion, et d'avoir contrition de mes péchés de façon que je puisse mourir dans votre sainte foi et finalement jouir de la gloire éternelle avec vos saints. Mon Dieu et mon rédempteur, je proteste à cette heure que, moyennant votre aide et votre grâce, je m'abstiendrai de pécher, et je me propose, pour l'amour de vous, de ne plus vous offenser. Je vous supplie de me garder et de me confirmer dans ce propos, mon Dieu et mon glorificateur, et je vous promets de me confesser du mieux que je pourrai, selon votre commandement et celui de l'Eglise. Je vous supplie, par révérence de votre bienheureuse mort et de votre douloureuse passion, qu'en vertu des prières de la douce Vierge Marie, vous daignez me pardonner tous mes péchés et me défendre contre l'Ennemi à l'heure de ma mort, et me conduire à la gloire éternelle. Amen."

Some later manuscripts of Charles revealed his interest in church reform due to the disturbing state of ecclesiastical conditions in Spain.[1] Charles approached the question of church reform with a moderate and conciliatory attitude and was distressed by the hardening of the positions on both sides.[2]

Since Charles was not a theologian, he did not understand the theological issues involved in the religious controversy in Germany. His repeated suggestion that the problems of the church be solved by calling a general council revealed his political and non-theological understanding of the situation.[3] His theological naivety was reflected in his continued hope for an easy solution to the problem of the divided church in Germany.[4]

The agreement reached at the time of his election as emperor ("Wahlkapitulation") challenged Charles with the responsibility of effecting reform in the empire.[5] Charles

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1. Brandi, Charles V, p. 87.

2. Gertrude von Schwarzenfeld, Charles V, Father of Europe, translated by Ruth Mary Bethell (Chicago, 1957), p. 39.

3. Hubert Jedin, "Die Päpste und das Konzil in der Politik Karls V," in Karl V. Der Kaiser und seiner Zeit (Köln, 1960), p. 107.

4. Brandi, Charles V, p. 494.

5. Ernst Walder, Kaiser, Reich und Reformation, 1517-1525 ("Quellen zur neueren Geschichte," vol. III; Bern, 1944), p. 26: ". . . damit die mengel, gebrechen und beswerungen allenthalben im heiligen reiche abgelainet, reformirt und in gut wesen und ordnung gebracht werd . . . ."

thought of ecclesiastical reform in terms of a church council which he thought would end the controversy and would reform the church in head and members.[1] He was influenced in this direction by his councelor, Gattinara, and by his predecessors in office since the days of Sigismund.[2] The confessor of Charles warned him publicly in 1519 that God would not forgive him if he failed to bring about the necessary reform of the church.[3] Charles sincerely desired to reform the church but was hindered by his differences with the papacy and by his preoccupation with other activities.[4] The following letter to the pope indicates the seriousness with which Charles approached church reform and advocated the calling of a council:

> Something good is certain to be decided. If the heretics refuse so generous an offer they will have everyone against them. But if there were to be no council, Germany, the strongest and most warlike nation in Christendom, would fall into the gravest peril. At present the world is at peace so that a council can easily be called to prevent the further breeding of schism. If it should again come to war, then at the very worst we could dissolve the council. We then, Your Holiness and I, would

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[1] Jedin, "Die Päpste und das Konzil," pp. 107-108.

[2] Ludolphy, Die Voraussetzungen der Religionspolitik Karls V, p. 9.

[3] Royall Tyler, The Emperor Charles the Fifth (London, 1956), p. 71.

[4] Jedin, "Die Päpste und das Konzil," p. 109. Tyler, Emperor Charles the Fifth, p. 74, places the efforts of Charles in the context of preparation for the counter reformation: "He meant to save the Church in spite of the pope and his court. It was not given to him to see a Council crown his labours. But his devotion rallied the support of many men of good will who like himself trusted tradition rather than experiment in matters of faith. The ground was being prepared for the counter-reformation."

> have done what we could and others would have to bear the blame. God, I hope, would then punish those who were answerable for the evils which would fall on Christendom. Therefore I entreat and beseech you to consent to the council, so that we may avoid the burden of blame and win the approbation of all good men. It would be best if Your Holiness would in the meantime do your own part and get rid of such abuses as can readily be stopped. As the situation now stands, that would be a great help.[1]

c. Other princes. Little has been written on the ecclesiastical reform interests of the major princes like Maximilian and Charles, but the need for research on the territorial princes of the German nation is even greater. Reformation scholarship has not progressed far beyond generalizations about the religious convictions of various princes and their role in the Reformation. The religious convictions of territorial princes were of obvious importance; but in most cases these religious principles, or the lack of them, have not been discussed.

The princes who desired to expand their political power and influence had good reason to wish to rid themselves of Roman domination. The church was perhaps the last obstacle on the way to the formation of absolute political states, and it is easy to suggest that these princes used church reform as a means to extend their own authority.[2]

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[1] Quoted by Brandi, Charles V, p. 311.

[2] Kamnitzer, Deutschen Bauernkrieges, p. 93. Cf. the argument of Barraclough, Origins of Modern Germany, p. 321: "Thus we may describe the period 1356-1519 as the period in which the princes, having shaken off in practice the superior control of the emperor and reduced the empire to a mere confederation or agglomeration of principalities, set about the

The princes' role in the success of the Reformation came either in the protection they offered to the reformers or in their own desire for the reform of the church.[1] Even some of the bitterest enemies of Luther were adamant in pressing their demands for reform of the church and for limitations on the Roman administration in Germany. Most of the princes were united in withholding their consent to taxes paid to Rome until serious consideration of the German "grievances" was promised.[2]

One of the most interesting territorial princes to consider is Frederick the Wise. Kirn examined the ecclesiastical politics of Frederick and concluded that religion played a dominant role in his life. For example, Frederick's fame as a collector of relics is well known. When Luther began his attack upon indulgences, Frederick was fifty-five years old and had been a life-long loyal Catholic. He did not immediately become a "Lutheran." It was only after some time and

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task of asserting their authority over their subjects . . . ." Thus they could use the Reformation as a tool to break the authority of the church over their subjects, a necessary part of the expansion of princely authority.

[1] Paul Kirn, Friedrich der Weise und die Kirche ("Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance," vol. XXX; Leipzig, 1926), p. 129: "So kann man sagen: Gerettet wurde Luther und seine Sache durch das Wechselspiel der politischen Interessen und durch den sächsischen Kurfürsten." Kirn is unwilling to carry this generalization too far and, therefore, later in the work (p. 177) says concerning Frederick: "Der Sieg der Reformation in Kursachen ist nicht sein Werk."

[2] Holborn, Hutten, pp. 162-166.

with some difficulty that he changed his religious affiliation. Frederick wanted to do nothing in opposition to the will of God and was confused by the conflict between the voice of God's representative, the pope, and his own inclination to see that his subject was treated fairly.[1]

Frederick wanted to augment the political influence of his family, but Kirn doubts that he let his desire for increased political power determine his relationship to the church. He was more interested in doing his duty as a Christian prince than in adding to his own political power at the expense of the church. However, Kirn does find in Frederick's ecclesiastical politics some confusion over the boundaries between the worldly and spiritual powers.[2]

The kind of reform Frederick most frequently attempted was the reform of convents and monasteries. Without his influence, the reform of these convents would probably have been impossible: Weimar (before 1487), Wittenberg and Torgau (1488), Altenburg (1489), Saalfeld and Weida (1493), and Coburg (1496). The archives of Frederick and his brother John contain more than fifteen hundred documents concerning cloisters, demonstrating their long-standing interest in the improvement of the cloisters in their lands.[3] Frederick gave a thousand gulden to the cloister at Reinhardsbrunn with the stipulation that it would reform itself and hold him in eternal memory.[1] Frederick's letter to Hirsperg, February 20, 1491, was another example of his interest in the reform of monasteries.[2]

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[1] Kirn, Friedrich der Weise, pp. 22, 166, 168, 175.

[2] Ibid., pp. 14, 36, 173.

[3] Ibid., pp. 36, 71, 82.

Frederick also endeavored to correct the misuse of spiritual jurisdiction by the church in Saxony. The church disturbed the princes when it attempted to exercise jurisdiction in worldly as well as in spiritual matters. Duke George, an ally of Frederick in this struggle, asked the Reichstag in 1518 to "clarify what are spiritual and what are worldly affairs."[3]

2. The knights. The influence of social and economic factors on religious questions is seen in the German knights. The knights were losing their importance in the course of

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[1] Kirn, Friedrich der Weise, p. 105: "die angefangen reformation und heilige observanz domit zu enthalden, uns auch ein ewige gedechtnus zu halden."

[2] Ibid., p. 179: "Wir vernemen, wie der prior und bruder, in dem closter by uch ehe der reformacion gewest, vast schuldig by uch bleiben sein, auch noch schulde by uch ussenstehende haben, die sie vermeynen inzumanen. Nachdem uns aber yre prowincial vor zugesagt hadte, sie ganz zu reformiren, dadurch yn nicht geburt hedte einich eygenschaft zu haben, dannoch wiewol die reformacio durch yn nicht volkomen geschen ist, so wollen wir nicht, das sie fur sich einche schulde by uch inmanen sullen, und ist unser begere, das yr der samptlich oder sunderlich kein ussrichten oder folgen, sundern die zu vergnugunge der schulde, die sie schuldig blieben sind, dinen lasset und gleichwol doran seyt, das die schuldner den ytzigen brudern an den gelassen schulden gutige versehunge thun, angesehen yre bloss ankomen." Cf. also Fredericks' letter to Bishop John of Meissen, December 26, 1494 (ibid., pp. 179-180).

[3] Ibid., p. 47: "verclert werde, was geystliche ader werntliche sachen sein."

events within the German nation because of the strengthening of other classes. Many German knights were in dire economic straits. Their conviction that the church was largely responsible for their poverty stood behind their criticism of the church and their desire for reform.[1] Hutten provided a somber description of knightly existence:

> Such is the lot of the knight that even though my patrimony were ample and adequate for my support, nevertheless here are the disturbances which give me no quiet. We live in fields, forests, and fortresses. Those by whose labors we exist are poverty-stricken peasants, to whom we lease our fields, vineyards, pastures, and woods. The return is exceedingly sparse in proportion to the labor expended . . . . If I go away from home I am in peril lest I fall in with those who are at war or feud with my overlord, no matter who he is, and for that reason fall upon me and carry me away. If fortune is adverse, the half of my estates will be forfeit as ransom. When I looked for protection I was ensnared. We cannot go unarmed beyond two yokes of land. On that account we must have a large equipage of horses, arms, and followers, and all at great expense. We cannot visit a neighboring village or go hunting or fishing save in iron.
>
> Then there are frequently quarrels between our retainers and others, and scarcely a day passes but some squabble is referred to us which we must compose as discreetly as possible, for if I push my claim too uncompromisingly war arises, but if I am too yielding I am immediately the subject of extortion. One concession unlooses a clamor of demands. And among whom does all this take place? Not among strangers, my friend, but among neighbors, relatives, and those of the same household, even brothers . . . .
>
> The day is full of thought for the morrow, constant disturbance, continual storms. The fields must be ploughed and spaded, the vines tended, trees planted, meadows irrigated. There is harrowing, sowing, fertilizing, reaping, threshing: harvest and vintage. If the harvest fails in any year, then follow dire poverty,

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[1] Hitchcock, Knights' Revolt, p. 27.

unrest, and turbulence.[1]

Ulrich von Hutten is the best and fullest example of the ecclesiastical reform interest of the knightly class because of his extensive literary production. A survey of the literature of the time reveals no other knight whose opinion on church reform could have been widely known by the public. Other knights (Sickingen, e.g.) played a more important role in the actual struggle of the knights to regain their status, but their literary production comes nowhere near matching Hutten's.

If Hutten is at all typical, the German knights were interested in church reform. Their "desire for such reform stemmed from their own feelings about the inadequacy of existing church forms and from their natural feeling about the influence of Rome in the German Empire."[2] Hajo Holborn, in the basic work on Hutten in English, cites Hutten's combination of a desire for personal vengeance on his enemies with the idea of a thorough reform of the church. Hutten was convinced that war with Rome must come, and if the emperor and princes would not lead the way he would do so himself.[3] In Hutten's mind the domestic problem of church reform was more important than the need for a war with the Turks:

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[1] Quoted by Holborn, Hutten, pp. 18-19. See Opera, I, 201ff.

[2] Hitchcock, Knights' Revolt, p. 40.

[3] Holborn, Hutten, p. 161.

> If Germany would hear me I would advise that, necessary as the Turkish war may be, we should first cure this internal cancer before embarking on an Asiatic expedition. What good will it be to wipe out the Ottomans, who fight us for imperialist reasons, when at home we have the subverters of universal piety?[1]

Hutten's works lacked a clear method for ecclesiastical reform. He felt the need for church reform, but he did not set forth a constructive program to bring it about.[2] He furnished no systematic presentation of his theological position; and, therefore, it is difficult to determine his position on basic doctrines of the Reformation (justification, e.g.).[3]

Hutten's significance in the course of the Reformation and German history is not as a theologian or innovative reformer but as a representative of the frustrations and dissatisfactions of a particular aspect of German society.[4] For

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[1] Quoted by Holborn, Hutten, p. 103. Cf. Opera, I, 166: "Quodsi me audiat Germania, quanquam inferre Turcis bellum necesse est hoc tempore, prius tamen huic intestio malo remedium opponere quam de Asiatica expeditione cogitare iussero. nam quid Othomannorum domum, imperandi studio inimicam nobis, excisam tantopere cupimus, si istos ferimus in medio nostri universae pietatis inversores, Christianae sinceritatis conspurcatores, fidem apostolicam millesariam semper scindentes, novarum semper dissensionum ac novarum turbarum autores?"

[2] Grimm, The Reformation Era, p. 77. Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 120, contrasts Hutten's lack of a constructive program to the comprehensive program laid down by Erasmus in the Enchiridion.

[3] Held, Ulrich von Hutten, pp. 141-142.

[4] Grimm, The Reformation Era, p. 77: "Despite Hutten's many writings on the national theme, he never evolved a practical program of political or religious reform. His fearless and brilliant invective, like his life, served no visible,

Reformation studies he illustrates the reform interests of a class of German society. For German history he has an important place in the development of national pride and political self-consciousness. Gerhard Ritter concludes that for his contribution to German nationalism "Ulrich von Hutten retains an honorable place among the memorable figures of our national history."[1]

Since Hutten provided little in the way of a constructive program, his reform endeavors mainly took the form of expression of grievances and criticisms. He outlined these grievances and criticisms in three dialogues which he published in 1520.[2] His grievances were nothing new in German history, but he stated them quite forcefully. They gained wider popular appeal when, in 1518, he changed his vehicle of expression from Latin to German.[3] Hutten criticized the lack of seriousness in Catholic piety but was not opposed to the Catholic religion in its theory.[4] Thus Hutten's reform attempt was essentially different from Luther's. Hutten was

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positive ends. But his writings give us a clear conception of the dissatisfaction and conflicts, the vague dreams and aspirations, of the German people at the beginning of the sixteenth century."

[1] Weltwirkung der Reformation, p. 111.

[2] The Roman Trinity, The Observers, and Fever the Second. The modern edition is Gesprächbuchlein.

[3] Ritter, Weltwirkung der Reformation, pp. 107-108.

[4] Held, Ulrich von Hutten, pp. 142-144, and Ritter, Weltwirkung der Reformation, p. 106.

not in theological rebellion against the Roman church, and it is questionable if he understood the theological foundation for Luther's reform.[1] If the Reformation was primarily an attack on ecclesiastical abuses, then Hutten was one of the major reformers. On the other hand, if the Reformation was based on theological change, then Hutten's significance for the movement wanes.

A summary of Hutten's criticisms is the best way to approach his ecclesiastical reform interests. His primary theme of criticism was the immorality which he thought was so widely present in Rome. Ehrenhold, with whom Hutten carried on a dialogue in the Roman Trinity, doubted that more than one out of a hundred Romanists ~~Romans~~ lived more than a mediocre Christian life.[2] At another point in the dialogue, Ehrenhold bemoaned the fact that Rome was no longer inhabited by men like the heroes of the past. The contemporary inhabitants raised fortunes by atrocities and tyranny and abandoned all virtue and reason.[3] Hutten observed that the Romanists ~~Romans~~ attempted to drive three things out of Rome: simplicity, moderateness, and piety.[1] When asked what were the three most valuable items in Rome, Vadiscus, another of Hutten's characters, replied that they were service to God, justice, and true friendship (because of their scarcity).[2] The situation was so bad in Rome that Hutten could not find three good things to connect as he had done so many times with various vices and sins.[3]

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[1] Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, p. 128: "But Hutten did not understand the basic religious impulse of Luther's movement. To him the Reformation was but an ally in a program dictated by his own class status and personal bent."

[2] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, pp. 186-187: "Ich zweifle jedoch, ob unter hundert Romanisten einer gefunded wird, der mehr als mittelmässig recht und christlich lebe und glaube." Hutten's reply is interesting also: "Darauf wollte ich soeben kommen. Drei Dinge, sagt Vadiscus, glauben sehr wenige Leute in Rom: Unsterblichkeit der Seele, Gemeinschaft der Heiligen und Pein der Hölle."

[3] Ibid., p. 106.

Hutten's dialogues criticized the shameless immorality of the ~~Romans~~ Romanists. "At Rome people do things which we are ashamed to mention, they are so contrary to nature."[4] Hutten blamed the immorality in Germany on the example set by Rome.[5] Vadiscus named three things which were commonly practiced in Rome: "fleshly voluptuousness, costly dress, and pride or insolence."[6] Christian morality and virtue were not esteemed as highly as immorality and material possessions. The people in Rome valued pretty women, beautiful horses, and papal bulls. Ehrenhold criticized the greater worth given these things instead of Christian freedom and evangelical truth.[1] Vadiscus told Hutten: "Every man in Rome exalts three things: money, boldness, and shamelessness."[2] Another time he condemned the ~~Romans'~~ Romanists desire for short masses, money, and a voluptuous life.[3]

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, p. 105: "Drei Dinge sind aus Rom ins Elend vertrieben, Einfalt, Mässigkeit und Frömmigkeit."

[2] Ibid., p. 188: "Gottesdienstliche Werke, Gerechtigkeit und wahre Freundschaft."

[3] Ibid., p. 189: "So wenig, dass er keine Dreiheit daraus hat machen können."

[4] Ibid., p. 112: "denn zu Rom tut man Dinge, die wir uns hier zu sagen schämen, so widernatürlich sind sie!"

[5] Ibid., p. 137: "Es sollte uns mit Recht der deutschen Nation jammern, dass sie sich von dieser Räude der Romanisten so arg hat beschmutzen lassen. Die Scham verbietet uns, von dem, was wir wisen, viel zu sagen."

[6] Ibid., p. 112: "fleischliche Wollust, köstliche Kleider und Hoffart oder Ubermut."

Hutten believed that the ~~Romans~~ Romanists had an insatiable desire for money for which they would sell anything. He criticized the sale of indulgences and of ecclesiastical offices because nothing could be in more opposition to the teachings of Christ. Admittedly, Rome condemned simony with words, but nothing was more commonly practiced.[4] Rome specialized in the buying and selling of three kinds of commodities: Christ, ecclesiastical benefices, and women.[5] The church "allowed" the Germans to elect their own bishops but required them to buy their "Mantel" from Rome. Hutten questioned the "freedom" in this procedure. He asked whether it was more correct to call the Turks the enemies of Christ, or those at Rome "who overcame the worthy church of God with money."[1]

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, p. 110.

[2] Ibid., p. 136: "Drei Dinge erheben jedermann in Rom: Geld, Kühnheit und Unverschämtheit."

[3] Ibid., p. 180.

[4] Ibid., pp. 116, 133, 167.

[5] Ibid., p. 107: "Die Römer handeln mit dreierlei Ware, mit Christus, geistlichen Lehen und Weibern."

According to Hutten, justice was also for sale in Rome. Roman courts respected only those people who had money which, along with the assistance of influential people, could guarantee the success of a law suit.[2] The ~~Romans~~ Romanists did not hesitate to bypass legal procedure which they themselves had established, and, for a price, would permit others to do the same.[3]

Hutten criticized the popes for not conforming to the Christian ideal. Ehrenhold knew of no honest popes in the previous eight hundred years of church history. Moreover, the popes blatantly disregarded the sword of the Holy Spirit which was the word of God. Their intervention in secular matters and desire for material possessions demonstrated their abandonment of the Christian ideal. The worst part of this desertion was the fact that the popes seduced others by their misconduct.[4] Hutten's remedy for these papal abuses was for the emperor to force the popes to eliminate them.[5] He hoped that it would be unnecessary to abolish the papacy in order to heal the illnesses besetting the church.[1]

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, pp. 88-89: "Sollte man mit grösserm Rechte die Türken, die mit uns um Land und Leute Krieg führen, Feinde Christi nennen als euch zu Rom, die ihr die würdigen Gotteskirchen mit Geld überwindet?"

[2] Ibid., pp. 106, 135-136.

[3] Ibid., p. 118: "Im Gegenteil aber übertreten sie, was sie selbst eingesetzt haben, und gestatten andern für Geld, es zu übertreten."

[4] Ibid., pp. 99-100, 113, 148, 193.

[5] Holborn, Hutten, p. 78.

As a German nationalist, Hutten was disturbed by the pride and greed of the popes. He was irritated by the practice of the emperor kissing the foot of the pope which he interpreted as a sign of pride: "This is above all a great and excessive pride. However, I hear from some who think that Charles will not endure this injustice and will not kiss the foot of the pope."[2] One example of the greed of the papacy was the invention and use of the donation of Constantine to enlarge the prerogatives of the church.[3] Hutten believed that such deception could easily fool so simple a people as the Germans.[4] He compared the admission of treacherous papal legates to Germany to the entry of the Trojan horse.[1]

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[1] Hutten, *Gesprächbuchlein*, p. 129: "Ehrenhold: Es ist böse genug. Meinst du aber, wenn wir dem Körper das sieche Haupt abschlügen, dass er dann am Leben erhalten bliebe? Hutten: Ohne Haupt dann ein Körper nicht leben; aber es ist auch nicht vonnöten, das Haupt abzuschneiden, sondern man mag, was siech ist, ausschneiden und dadurch die Krankheit heilen und die Gebrechen beseitigen."

[2] *Ibid*., p. 114: "Das ist vor allem eine grosse und ubermässige Hoffart. Ich höre aber von einigen, die da meinen, Karl werde diese Unbilligkeit nicht leiden und den päpstlichen Fuss nich küssen." Ehrenhold contrasts the pride of the pope with the humility of Christ who washed the feet of his disciples (*ibid*., p. 113).

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 101-103. Ehrenhold described the donation of Constantine as "eine alte Fabel und mir nicht glaublich." (*ibid*., p. 190).

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 216-217.

However, Hutten did not place all of the blame for the religious state of affairs in Germany on the pope and the Roman court. The German people would not have had to suffer with so much corruption in the church if they had not been blinded by foolish superstition. Their superstition had led them into their darkest moments.[2] Those responsible had "infused the common people with superstition, infatuated their minds by swindle and magic, mocking and seducing their sound understanding."[3]

Hutten was also concerned with the reform of the church on the local level for which a reformed clergy was a necessary ingredient.[4] He censured the clergy's lack of training and commitment to the priesthood:

> Though a well trained man could be obtained, thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, nevertheless a swashbuckling Junker is assigned as shepherd of souls. Perhaps he lives outside of the country and never pays any attention to his flock, but leaves them to some hireling at

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, p. 168: "Wenn wir solche Legaten hier einlassen und aufnehmen, ist das nicht ebenso, als ob die Trojaner das leidige Pferd, worin die Griechen eingeschlossen waren, in ihre Stadt hineinzogen und dadurch ihre Zerstörung herbeiführten?"

[2] Ibid., pp. 138, 227.

[3] Ibid., p. 237: "Gar sehr, weil sie dem gemeinen Volk Aberglauben einflössen, die Gemüter durch Schwindel und Zauberei betören, äffen und so den gesunden Verstand verleiten und verführen."

[4] Holborn, Hutten, p. 127: "The central point, however, was the reform of the clergy. A new priesthood, consecrated to its original purpose, should preach and exemplify German simplicity and purity. The restoration of Christian piety and of primitive German manliness went hand in hand for Hutten."

threepence.[1]

The absence of serious dedication in many priests led Hutten to characterize them as "loafers and good for nothing, except to eat and drink."[2]

The need for reform was also indicated to Hutten by the shocking immorality of the clergy. The average priest had little in common with Christian humility inasmuch as he exercized a tyranny over the princes of the world and had the entire Christian people submissive to him.[3] Hutten's dialogue, The Observers, characterized the clergy as vile, good for nothing, idle, and gluttonous. They lived luxuriously, would endure no hardship, fled from work, hated sober and noble life, and wanted everyone to be under their influence. Sol, one character in the dialogue, concluded: "Their belly is their God."[4] In like manner, sexual immorality of the clergy disgusted Hutten. The priests and monks had "kept" women from whom they could not free themselves because they feared what might happen should the women expose their sin.[1] These priests who had concubines lost all honor and respect of Hutten. This clerical immorality was one reason unbelievers did not become Christians.[2]

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[1] Quoted by Holborn, Hutten, p. 154. Cf. Opera, II, 148.

[2] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 62: "die grösstenteils Müssiggänger und zu nichts nutz sind, als zum Fressen und Saufen."

[3] Ibid., p. 51, and p. 66: "Und obgleich der grösste Teil das allerböseste Leben führt, nennen sie sich doch die heilige, christliche Kirche, und als wären sie von Gott, wollen sie Kleriker gennant sein, während doch niemand weniger mit Christo zu tun hat, als sie. Aber sie massen sich diese Titel an, üben eine Tyrannei über die Fürsten aller Welt und haben sich das christliche Volk so unterwürfig gemacht, dass es den geringsten unter ihnen 'Herr' schimpfen muss."

[4] Ibid., pp. 235-236: "Ist doch der Bauch ihr Gott!" (p. 236)

The clergy's materialism and financial exploitation of the people also evoked criticism from Hutten's pen. The clergy expended too much energy becoming rich instead of becoming more spiritual.[3] They had learned the methods of financial exploitation from Rome: "Our clergy have learned the trick from Rome. Note how they carry on among us with fraud and plunder. They squat on the most fertile places of Germany, the most productive fields, for they hold both sides of the Rhine."[4] Christ told Peter to feed his sheep, but the clergy robbed and plundered the Christian people.[5] They sold anything for a price, including Christ himself and the grace of the Holy Spirit.[6] Hutten believed that if the financial benefits were taken away the number of priests would drop drastically. However, if only one out of every hundred remained, they could adequately carry on the work of the church.[1]

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[1] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 46: "die Furcht, von der ich spreche, besteht gewöhnlich in der verbotenen Liebe."

[2] Ibid., pp. 35, 90.

[3] Ibid., p. 50.

[4] Quoted by Holborn, Hutten, p. 154. See Opera, IV, 402.

[5] Gesprächbuchlein, pp. 148-149: "Christus sprach zu Petrus: 'Weide meine Schafe.' Was tun diese? Plündern sie nicht das christliche Volk aus und treiben es durch ihre Räubereien in Armut und Elend?"

[6] Ibid., p. 89: "bringt zu Kauf alle Geistlichkeit, die Kirchenlehen, selbst Christum und die Gnade des heiligen Geistes."

The financial exploitation of the German people was perhaps the major complaint Hutten had against the church. He pictured Cajetan as an ostentatious representative of Rome who had come to Germany to raise money.[2] In a mood of impatience, Hutten asked:

> When will the bishop's coats, the annates, the pensions, and the innumerable robbers come to an end? When will the Romans put their own house in order? I fear we Germans will not be able to bear it much longer. Their unjust behavior and demand for money by which they control us has no end, no description, no limit.[3]

The Roman clergy exploited the German people by happily dispensing with the punishment for any sin, if only the proper financial transactions were arranged: "No shame is too great, no atrocity so bad, no greed so wrong, that the Romans will not gladly allow us to squeeze out of only for the dispensation of money. However, they themselves sin without dispensation."[4] Hutten believed that Christ himself, the Christian church, and the German nation would be better served if the money that had been going to Rome was kept in Germany.[1]

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[1] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 131.

[2] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[3] Ibid., pp. 79-80: "Wann will es doch ein Ende nehmen mit den Bischofsmänteln, den Annaten, Pensionen und der Unzahl von Räubereien? Wann wollen doch die Römer einmal ihren Dingen ein Mass setzen? Ich fürchte, wir Deutschen werdens nicht länger dulden können. Ihr unbilliges Gebaren, wodurch sie uns vergewaltigen, nimmt täglich zu, ihre Geldforderung hat kein Aufhören, keine Art, kein Mass."

[4] Ibid., p. 144: "Keine Schande ist so gross, keine Scheusslichkeit so arg, kein Laster so verkehrt, dass es uns die Römer nicht gern erlaubten, nur um für die Dispense Geld heraus zu quetschen. Gleichwohl sündigen sie selbst ohne Dispens."

Despite his many criticisms, Hutten had no real program or method for church reform. He approved of the calling of a general council to oversee the reform of the church, but he was pessimistic about its success since those in Rome feared the consequences of such a gathering. He reported that the pope so feared a council that he compelled all German bishops at their appointment to swear before God and on the Bible that they would never demand the calling of a council.[2]

This survey of the reform interests of Ulrich von Hutten, as a representative of the knightly class, has revealed him to be an example of the approach to ecclesiastical reform discussed in chapter three: "Ecclesiastical criticism as church reform." It is obvious that Hutten was strong on criticism and weak on positive programs. He was interested in building a strong German nation, a reformed church, and a revitalized knightly class,[3] but he did not offer a definite methodology to attain his goals. He exemplified one approach to the question of church reform and for that reason is important to this study.

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[1] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 160: "Ich glaube, nichts würde besser unserm Seligmacher Christus sowie der heiligen christlichen Kirche dienen, als wenn Deutschland die Geldforderung und Schatzung unternähme und das Geld im Lande behielte, denn dann würden die obergeheimschreiber und Kopisten in Rom Hungers sterben."

[2] Ibid., pp. 107-108, 153.

[3] Ibid., p. 227, for Hutten's attitude toward his class: "Das ist der Ritterorden, eine grosse Macht und Stärke der deutschen Nation, denn ihrer sind viele and kriegsgeübt."

3. The peasants. Peasant uprisings were a significant aspect of German history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These rebellions are part of the reason the period is known as one of growing unrest and revolutionary agitation.[1] The increasing turmoil led Rosenkranz to characterize the German political situation as particularly fertile for revolutionary movements.[2] The peasant uprisings threatened the ruling forces of society. For example, Maximilian feared that strong disciplinary action against his troops who were deserting to the French might cause them to join the Bundschuh.[3]

The over-all rising standard of living had not affected the peasants because of their relatively weak position and social status.[1] Thus their demands were mainly economic: (1) the abolition of foreign justice, (2) the limitation of taxes, (3) adequate compensation for labor services, (4) full use of woods and hunting grounds, (5) just distribution of priestly income and the property of monasteries.[2]

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[1] Gunther Franz, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg, I, 137, 140.

[2] Albert E. Rosenkranz, Der Bundschuh: Die Erhebungen des südwestdeutschen Bauernstandes in den Jahren 1493-1517 (2 vols.; "Schriften des Wissenschaftlichen Instituts der Elsass-Lothringer im Reich"; Heidelberg, 1927), I, 398, 437. For a good introduction to the political, social, and economic situation of the peasants, see Valentin Lötscher, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg in der Darstellung und im Urteil der zeitgenössischen Schweizer (Basel, 1943), pp. 11-31. Rosenkranz criticizes investigating the Bundschuh only as a prelude to the Reformation and the peasant uprisings of 1525 (Bundschuh, I, viii). For a description of the peasant in the time before the Reformation, see Kurt Uhrig, "Der Bauer in der Publizistik der Reformation bis zum Ausgang des Bauernkrieges," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, XXXIII (1936), 77-95.

[3] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 198. Archbishop Philipp of Cologne advised Maximilian to punish deserters secretly lest the dissatisfied peasants and soldiers unite (Bundschuh, II, 207-208).

Religious overtones were apparent in the peasant movements. The peasants' desire for the justice of God,[3] their cry for Christian freedom based on divine law,[4] and their religious enthusiasm or piety,[5] exhibited their religious conviction. They were convinced that their economic demands had religious sanction, and thus they could pray: "Merciful God, help the poor to take revenge."[6]

The peasant movement was marked by an anti-clerical and anti-ecclesiastical spirit. The peasants were bitter over what they considered to be the excessive money-making of the priests. They were willing to grant a reasonable income to the clergy, but felt that the possessions of the church were being misused.[1] They condemned the accumulation of benefices[2] and opposed the unjust distribution of priestly income which resulted when one priest had two or three benefices and others had none.[3] Their anti-clericalism also resulted from their realization that some churchmen were living worldly lives.[4] Their anti-ecclesiastical spirit led them to apply these same criticisms to the church as a whole, suggesting that both its possessions and its worldly power be limited.[5]

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[1] Barraclough, Origins of Modern Germany, p. 337.

[2] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, I, 285. For a listing of the peasant demands from the records of Freiburg, see ibid., II, 145, 183.

[3] Ibid., I, 288-289.

[4] Hitchcock, Knights' Revolt, p. 100.

[5] Ranke, History of the Reformation, pp. 106-107.

[6] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 145: "Barmherziger Gott, hilf den armen zu rächt!"

The peasants' interest in the concept of justice also had its religious overtones. They contrasted their contemporary experience of justice with the "old justice" or "godly justice" and longed for the earlier, idealized situation. Only the justice of God could restore the earlier system of justice. The ideal concept of justice should be grounded in the biblical revelation.[6] Joss Fritz and Hans Humels illustrated this desire for a biblical foundation for justice when they were under trial for their part in the uprisings. They both appealed to the justice of God as revealed in the Bible.[1]

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[1] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, I, 283; II, 171, 178.

[2] Ibid., II, 126: "ieder Priest nur ein pfrund söll haben."

[3] Ibid., II, 191: "welicher priester zwo oder dri pfrunden gehept, dem wolten si eine genommen haben und damit einen andern priester, der kein pfrund gehept, ouch versehen haben."

[4] Kamnitzer, Deutschen Bauernkrieges, p. 22.

[5] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, I, 284, 472.

[6] Franz, Bauernkrieg, I, 73, 136.

Beyond this theoretical desire for the justice of God, the peasants had very concrete grievances against the system of justice as they experienced it. They had little interest in abstract theological problems and measured religious truth in terms of its effect on their situation in life.[2] For example, in his trial Fritz asked for what was "godly, fair, and just."[3] The peasants complained about the frequent procrastination in judicial disputes by both spiritual and civil judges. They were sometimes caught between ecclesiastical and civil legal procedures and therefore urged a distinct separation between the two: spiritual judges should have jurisdiction only over spiritual matters.[4] The peasants' lack of prestige and influence in the social system placed them in a disadvantageous position with respect to the administration of justice.

The peasant movements opposed and questioned those in authority. They felt that both the emperor and the pope had to be obedient to God and fulfill their proper tasks in order to earn respect.[1] As long as those in authority ruled properly, the peasants were willing to give them the obedience and respect which they deserved in their respective realms.[2] However, under the leadership of Joss Fritz, the peasants struggled for their freedom from the emperor as well as from the pope because these conditions were not met. Their relative political impotence tended to force the peasants to oppose all those who held political power.[3]

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[1] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 186, 191, 225.

[2] Oskar Vasella, "Bauerntum und Reformation in der Eidgenossenschaft," Historisches Jahrbuch, LXXVI (1957), 62.

[3] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 191: ". . . nutzit anders furnemen zu handlen denn allein das, so göttlich, zimlich, und billich were." Cf. 193: "uf das hett bemelter Joss Fritz witter geredt, zimlich und billich were, und die grossen wucher und was nit göttlich nach billich were, ab thun."

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 269, 272-274; II, 190.

Scholarly opinion varies as to whether the Bundschuh was revolutionary in nature. Franz believes that the peasants wanted no revolution. They called for the justice of God, but they meant the system of justice that had prevailed in former times. They tried to return to an earlier system and did not look toward the future in a revolutionary way.[4] Rosenkranz, on the other hand, characterizes the Bundschuh as a passionately revolutionary movement.[5] He commends the excellent leadership offered by men like Joss Fritz and interprets the movement as a group of malcontents whose influence and significance was due largely to the excellence of their leaders.[1]

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[1] The pope was to control spiritual affairs; the emperor was to bring freedom to Christendom and to regain the Holy Land. See Franz, Bauernkrieg, I, 119, and Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 194, 206.

[2] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 186: "Namlich und des ersten so hant si zu im gsagt, man wurd dem bapst geben, was im zugehorte, und dem keisser och das, so im zuhorte."

[3] Ibid., I, 254, 276, 285; II, 190, 194.

[4] Franz, Bauernkrieg, I, 68-69.

[5] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, I, 473.

4. The towns. The absence of previous historical study and the lack of source materials permit only brief examination of the religious and reform interests of the towns in Germany.[2] The "stadtischen Bewegung" revealed an interest in relatively great social change. Its three interacting elements were anticlericalism, moderate reform, and a radical communism.[3] In general, many cities were filled with hatred against the avarice of the Romans, the power of the bishops, and the privileges of the clergy.[4]

The "städtischen Bewegung" had some revolutionary characteristics. Kurt Kaser relates how the thrust of the movement varied from town to town. In some cities it demanded particular reforms, turning its attention to specific parts of the ecclesiastical system. In other places it took the form of a passionate and destructive struggle against the old culture and advocated a revolutionary re-organization of the church.[1] Steinmetz believes that the issue of indulgences, for the first time in German history, united all German people under the leadership of the middle classes in a revolt against the papal church.[2] In addition, the acceptance of the Reformation in some German cities indicated the presence of a "revolutionary" spirit in their religious views.[3]

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[1] Rosenkranz, Bundschuh, II, 182. A document from Freiburg reveals the feeling that the Bundschuh was a personal accomplishment of Fritz. The 1513 account related how the speeches of Fritz could move the people: "domit er vil leut zu seinem boshaftigen furnemen bewegen mocht" (II, 161).

[2] It is an obvious need of Reformation scholarship for historians to work on the course of the Reformation in the towns of Germany. What is required is an examination of the religious situation in a town before the Reformation, a description of the process by which a particular town accepted or rejected the Reformation, and the longer-range effects of this decision. This study can only hint at what some of the religious concerns of the townsmen were.

[3] Kurt Kaser, Politische und soziale Bewegungen im deutschen Bürgertum zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts (Stuttgart, 1899), pp. 5-6, 188.

[4] For example, Friedrich Roth, Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte, 1517-1527 (Munich, 1881), p. 35, summarizes the situation in Augsburg.

One aspect of the towns' desire for reform was their criticism of the church and its clergy. The opposition to the church in the towns reached its fullest development when it combined with the anti-clerical impulse of the time.[4] The townspeople resented the economic privileges of the clergy,[5] which included such things as free import and export of corn and wine. Opposition also arose because of the sentiment that the sale of indulgences was used to fill the cash boxes of the pope in Rome.[6]

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[1] Kaser, Politische und soziale Bewegungen, pp. 192-193.

[2] Max Steinmetz, "Die frühburgerliche Revolution in Deutschland, 1476-1535," Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft, VIII (1960), 116.

[3] Moeller, Reichstadt und Reformation, pp. 10, 19.

[4] Kaser, Politische und soziale Bewegungen, p. 185.

[5] Kamnitzer, Deutschen Bauernkrieges, p. 84.

[6] Kaser, Politische und soziale Bewegungen, pp. 4, 38.

The towns also included in church reform their desire for independence from ecclesiastical domination. A secularism prevailed which sought to remove all control of non-religious affairs from the ecclesiastics. The free cities were subject only to imperial jurisdiction and were almost independent republics. They did not want the church to infringe upon any of their rights or to gain control of any aspect of the life of the town.[1] In the fourteenth century the towns had found it necessary to fight against the church to retain their freedom.[2] Their memory of these fights led to their fear of ecclesiastical domination. Therefore, the location of a bishop and his chapter in a city often brought about strained relations. The townspeople were suspicious, sometimes with good reason, that the bishop would not act in the best interests of the city.[3]

The presence of socialist and democratic tendencies within the towns has been debated. According to Kaser, the fifteenth century marked the first appearance of socialist tendencies in the cities.[4] Moeller prefers to describe the feeling every townsman had of himself as a member of the whole, as a part of the organization of society, as

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1. E.B. Bax, The Social Side of the Reformation in Germany (3 vols.; London, 1894-1903), I, 10.

2. Barraclough, Origins of Modern Germany, pp. 329-330.

3. Roth, Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte, pp. 19-21.

4. Politische und soziale Bewegungen, pp. 17-33.

"collective-individuals." Moeller characterizes the organization of the late medieval cities as a sacral community (sakrale Gemeinschaft).[1] A similar difference of opinion exists between Kaser and Moeller with respect to the question of democratic tendencies in fifteenth century German cities. Kaser observes a growing democratic spirit which Moeller chooses to call an oligarchical tendency.[2]

5. Social reform literature. In our period social reform literature was not extensive. Two documents of social reform, dating from the fifteenth century, do deserve consideration: the Reformation of Emperor Sigismund and the Oberrheinische Revolutionär. The Reformation is particularly important because it was in the second decade of the sixteenth century that it gained its fullest appreciation.[3] The author was a layman who wrote the first revolutionary document published in the German language.[4] The work is unique because of the concreteness and specificity of the author's suggestions. It does not deal in vague generalities but in precise recommendations as to how conditions in the church might be

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[1] Reichstadt und Reformation, pp. 11-13.

[2] Politische und soziale Bewegungen, p. 201, and Reichstadt und Reformation, p. 17.

[3] Janssen, History of the German People, IV, 133.

[4] Die Reformatio des kaisers Sigmund, edited by Heinrich Werner, lv. Hereafter cited as RS. Bezold, "Die 'armen Leute,' " p. 26. For details about the printing of the work, see Lortz, Reformation in Deutschland, II, 334.

improved.[1] Questions of the interpretation of the document revolve around its "revolutionary" nature, its use by Marxist historians, and its role as a precipitating factor in the later peasant wars.[2]

The Oberrheinische Revolutionär is the lesser-known of the two documents. Its author was well-educated and not a peasant, but little else can be said about him.[3] Because it was not published until after our period, the work did not have the wide dessimination that the Reformation had.[4] The complaints raised in the work were similar to those raised by morality preachers like Geiler, reform theologians like Wesel, humanists, and the various gravamina. The author's sources included legal codes, the Bible, the church fathers, the Roman classics, and learned literature of the Middle Ages.[5] Together these two works give an impression of the kinds of social concerns that were troubling educated persons in German society in the late fifteenth century.

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1. Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 13, suggests that previous research has not emphasized enough the specific contents of the work.

2. For literature on the Marxist interpretation of the work, see Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 16. In the introduction to RS, Werner disagrees with the interpretation that poses the RS as the first battle cry of later peasant uprisings: "Hat man sie auch in der neuesten Zeit als 'Trompete des Bauernkrieges' fälschlich bezeichnet . . . ." (p. v).

3. Haupt, OR, pp. 89-96, discusses authorship of the work.

4. Franz, Bauernkrieg, I, 115.

5. Haupt, OR, pp. 95, 107.

These two documents shared a generally pessimistic outlook. They advocated the need for a general reform with respect to both spiritual and temporal affairs.[1] The pessimism of the Revolutionär came from the feeling that truth had been destroyed, that love had been extinguished, that injustice had the upper hand, and that justice was dead.[2]

Economic grievances played a large role in the dissatisfaction expressed in these two works. The Reformation complained about the avarice of the laity and condemned the simony practiced by the clergy.[3] It was also critical of the papacy for its involvement in corrupt financial practices. The author was convinced that simony and avarice were increasing within the papal court.[4] The pope, the cardinals, and the monks who were involved in the system of dispensations were leading themselves further into hell.[1] The author warned the pope not to overstep the bounds that God had set. The pope should not presume to make decisions against the will of God.[2] In like manner, the *Revolutionär* was appaled at the material interests of the monks, the tremendous funnelling of money from Germany into Italy,[3] and the immorality of the clergy. The greed of the popes in indulgences also distressed the author.[4] Perhaps the most revolutionary concept in the *Revolutionär* was the approval it gave to the secularization of church property.[5]

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[1] RS, p. 79: "Das gaistliche recht ist kranck, das kaisertum und alles, das im zu gehört, statt ze unrecht, man muss es mit kraft durch prechen, das auch sein muss. Wend die grossen schlaffen, so mussent die clainen wachen, das es doch ye gan muss." At another point the author described the grievous situation: "wodurch die ganze welt in Kummer liegt" (quoted by Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 128).

[2] Haupt, OR, p. 114: "die warheit ist vertilget, daz boss furtringet daz güt; die unrecht uberflussikeit ist zü stark geworden, daz si daz recht het getodet und alle truw vertilget, die liebe verloschen."

[3] Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 169.

[4] RS, pp. 3-4: "Wie nun simoni und geitz aufgewachsen sind, sond ir hören. Simony ist uffgestanden des ersten in des pabstes hof, als ich ew sag. Es ist by zwainhundert jaren, das der hoff ains pabstes wol stund in guter ordnung, als er geordnet was des ersten von dem Kayser Constantino und bey Sant Silvestro und ward das patrimonium Sant Peter der hailigen kirchen wol aufgezaichnet, das der hoff und all cardinäl erlich bestönden und noch heut by tag erlich und wol beston mugend."

Dissatisfaction with the church extended further than a disapproval of the financial drain on Germany. The *Reformation* made specific suggestions regarding the holders of ecclesiastical offices. The size of a bishop's court should be limited,[1] and the bishop should closely supervise the churches under his jurisdiction by frequent and regular visits to each parish.[2] The author expected both bishops and cardinals to be thoroughly acquainted with law, justice, and the Bible.[3] The practical nature of the Reformation is revealed in the author's fear of the power of certain orders of the church if one of their members should become pope. Therefore, the author proposed electing no one pope who was a member of one of these domineering orders.[4]

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[1] *RS*, p. 22: "Der pabst hab mit den iren gedispensiert. O des dispensierens! Der pabst, cardinel, und orden gand mit ainander in die holle."

[2] "ein babst hat aller ding gewalt, was sich zeucht zum rechten und zum himel gehort. item alle sunder zu enpfahen zu genaden aber nichts zu erlauben, das wider das recht ist, das got zugehort" (quoted by Dohna, *Reformatio Sigismundi*, p. 110).

[3] Haupt, *OR*, p. 118: "wan ein oberer erwelt wirt in dem orden, so hilfft si ein tunfas mit gold kum mer, und nemmens von der Tutschen nacion in Italien. domit so wirt die Tutschen nation mit ieren bischoffen und prelaten goldes und silbers erösset."

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

Furthermore, both works included a program for alleviating their grievances. First, they set forth certain Christian concepts as a means of improving conditions within the church. An important concept in both works was order.[5] The Reformation argued that people were not as obedient as they should be to the order ordained by God.[1] The author bemoaned the absence of obedience and justice and argued that "nothing exists in the right order."[2] This right order was based on truth, God's righteousness, and freedom.[3] The Revolutionär proposed founding order on the law of God.[4] The concept of justice loomed large in the understanding or order. At times "godly" and "just" were used as synonyms.[5] Everyone had the possibility and, therefore, the duty to bring about justice.[6]

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[1] The size of a bishop's court was limited to seven persons, and the cardinals to twelve (RS, pp. 29-30, 24).

[2] Ibid., p. 35: "Item ain bischoff sol alle jar ainest visitieren alle kirchen in seinem bistum und wol besehen umb alle ding der kirchen, das es wol stand und ob kain irrung zwischen ainen pfarer und der kirchen zugehornde sey, das sollichs gewendet und geainiget werde."

[3] Ibid., p. 31: "Ain cardinal sol sein ain doctor der gesetz, in der hayligen geschrift und in den rechten. Ain bischoff sol sein doctor in der hailigen geschrifft und in decretis."

[4] Ibid., pp. 19, 27.

[5] This has led some historians to argue that the RS has a static, not dynamic, view of society. See Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 151. Cf. Schubert, Revolution und Reformation, p. 8: "Die ganze Schrift ist eine einziger Schrei nach Ordnung."

Another concept was reform in the eschatological sphere (the coming kingdom of God). This idea included a future emperor who would be a kind of messiah.[7] The author of the Revolutionär anticipated that a new emperor, Frederick III, would solve the problems of society and the church. Thus the author tied together social reform and ecclesiastical reform.[8]

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[1] "man ist nit gehorsam als man sein solt. Die Ordnung aber ist von Gott gesetzt" (quoted by Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 59).

[2] RS, p. 2: "gehorsamkait ist tod, gerechtikait leidet not, nichtes statt in seiner rechten ordnung."

[3] Hassinger, Werden des Europa, p. 108.

[4] Haupt, OR, p. 160: "Ouch wen ein babst oder ein keiser wider die gebotz gottes tut, so soll man ihn absetzen und in daz ellend wisen."

[5] Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 110.

[6] Quoted by ibid., p. 89: "Es muss yedermann recht thunn oder es muss abgethon werden."

[7] Ibid., p. 124.

[8] Haupt, OR, p. 106.

Frederick would reestablish the church in its ancient purity and fulfill the mission of the German people.[1] The *Reformation* expected Frederick to institute the kingdom of peace.[2] It predicted the coming of a priest-king who would prefigure the return of Christ and would inaugurate the kingdom of God. This priest-king would bring the order of God to power, create peace, and secure the obedience of the lords and the cities.[3]

The third concept was that the emperor should be dedicated to the protection of the church and to Christian principles. The *Revolutionär* criticized those emperors who had turned their backs on their responsibilities and had been destroyers of the Christian church. The emperor should unite all the world under one faith and one spiritual shepherd.[4] Constantine was the prime example of an emperor ruling according to Christian principles. The contemporary emperor who followed Constantine's example would improve existing conditions.[5]

As a second part of their program, these two reformatory documents made several specific suggestions concerning methods by which these ideas could be implemented. There was an honest and realistic recognition by the author of the *Reformation* of the need for the exercise of power on the part of both spiritual and secular leaders in order to bring about the necessary reforms. These leaders should follow the advice of the vicars of God and the teachings of natural law.[1]

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[1] Gravier, *Luther et l'opinion publique*, p. 21.

[2] Dohna, *Reformatio Sigismundi*, p. 193.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 82, 191.

[4] Haupt, *OR*, pp. 159, 178.

[5] Dohna, *Reformatio Sigismundi*, p. 63. See *RS*, pp. 77-78.

The *Reformation* stressed the need for God's help in solving the problems of society. The work begins with a prayer asking God to give power, grace, and wisdom so that all spiritual and secular institutions could be ordered according to his will.[2] In a later passage the author added that only the power of God and the worldly sword could effect the divinely ordained order.[3]

The *Reformation* suggested a church council as a possible remedy for the maladies of the church. God intended for the church to order itself rightly by means of councils. The church was neither an institution nor a hierarchy of clergy, but the community of the faithful. In that sense the council was the representation of all Christendom.[4]

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1. Dohna, *Reformatio Sigismundi*, p. 114. Cf. *RS*, p. 182: "man kan dye reformatz nit aussgeben dann mit gewalt und pene zo verorden, daz sye bestee."

2. *RS*, p. 1: "Almachtiger got, schopffer hymels und des ertrichs, gib kraft und tuo gnad, gib weizhait zu volbringen nach dem aller säligosten stant ain ordnung zehaben gaistliches und weltliches stattes und wesens, in dem dein hailiger name und gothayt bekant werd; wann dein zorn ist offen, dein ungnad hat uns begriffen; wir gangen als die schauff on ainen hürtten."

3. *Ibid*., pp. 7-8: "Sol man aber kumen zu gottlicher ordnung, so muss es zugan durch gottes kraft und durch das weltlich swert."

4. *Ibid*., p. 101: "Des ersten, als wir ain beraitung und den weg suchen solten zu ainer rechten ordnung, do mer merckten wir, das got der hailigen kirchen die hohe ere tut, das durch ain hailige concili volbracht sol werden die ordnung des hailigen christenlichen glaubens; wann ain yeclich concili ist nun recht bezaichnet die hailig kirchen."

The author of the Reformation advocated the use of the sacraments in reform. He believed that partaking of the seven sacraments would bring about reform, would lead to a righteous life, and would institute a just order.[1] The Revolutionär did not discuss this kind of reform since it tended to avoid theological questions.[2]

The reform program of these two works also emphasized the importance of secular aspects of life and the use of the Bible in individual Christian reform. The Revolutionär subordinated the pope to the emperor and the spiritual order to the worldly order. It proposed that both spiritual goods and ecclesiastical states should be secularized.[3] This line of argument is similar to the separation between spiritual and temporal powers outlined in the Reformation.[4] The Revolutionär carried the argument to the point of saying that the possessions of the church belonged to the poor people, and not to the monks, the priests, or various leaders.[5] Both documents urged the use of the Bible in the reform of existing conditions within church and society; for the Reformation the sayings of Jesus played a particularly important role.[1] The Reformation also affirmed the rebirth of individual Christians as a means of reform.[2]

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[1] RS, p. 9: "Darumb ist notturfftig, das man in der reformacion rure die siben sacrament, die gend auch den weg on alle gerechtikait in dem gaistlichen stat." Cf. the passage quoted by Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 66: "Sol man ein recht ordenung haben, so muss man (merken) dye syben sacrament, auss den nemen so zeucht man alle gerechte ding in ein gut ordenung."

[2] Haupt, OR, p. 175.

[3] Ibid., p. 107.

[4] Gravier, Luther et l'opinion publique, p. 21.

[5] Haupt, OR, p. 170: "Die opfer gottes gehoren nit munchen noch pfaffen oder anderen geistlichen oder weltlichen personen zü, sunder si sind der armen, und man soll si zü nutz der gemein und beschirmnuss des lands bruchen und ussgen."

It is open to debate whether these documents were revolutionary in their intent. It is clear that they both raised serious criticisms of society. The **Reformation** has been considered to be a radical and revolutionary document yet in many ways the author generally followed a conservative, non-revolutionary approach.[3]

6. The German nation. The use of the term "German nation" requires a word of explanation. The German national state was, of course, a relatively late development in the history of Europe. In the early sixteenth century there was no political entity that corresponded precisely to the term "German nation." However, the term was used in our period, and the literature of the time contained references to the "German nation." Although there was not a specific political institution constituting the German nation, the idea did play a role in reform endeavors in Germany.

There was a sense of pride in the long and glorious history of the German nation. In the Revolutionär, Adam and other significant figures of antiquity were depicted as Germans, and Germans became the Urvolk for the rest of Europe.[1] Hutten wanted the nation to return to its earlier strength and old virtues. A character in one of his dialogues bragged that the Germans possessed so much honesty that they held virtue in higher regard than money.[2]

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[1] Haupt, OR, p. 133, and Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, p. 66.

[2] Dohna, Reformatio Sigismundi, pp. 36, 65.

[3] For a discussion of the conservatism of RS see ibid., pp. 52-68.

The humanists cultivated this feeling of national pride. They recognized Maximilian's desire for a renewal of old German glory and responded to it with considerable zeal.[3] In an earlier connection we have noted the strongly nationalistic tones in the works of Celtis.[4] The humanists were also proud of the German character. Cochläus gave God the credit for the inventiveness, power, and keenness of spirit of the Germans.[1] Wimpfeling boasted about German virtue and behavior.[2]

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[1] Haupt, OR, p. 141. Ferguson, Renaissance in Historical Thought, pp. 35-36.

[2] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, pp. 233, 238-239.

[3] Barraclough, Origins of Modern Germany, p. 362. Ritter, Weltwirkung der Reformation, p. 105. For literature (including German dissertations) on national consciousness and patriotism among the German humanists, see Leo Stern, Philipp Melanchthon: Humanist, Reformator, Praeceptor Germaniae ("Festgabe des Melanchthon-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik"; Halle, 1960), pp. 73-74. The standard work is still Joachimsen's Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtschreibung im Deutschland unter dem Einfluss des Humanismus.

[4] On the efforts of Celtis in developing German national consciousness, see Ulrich Paul, Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Nationalbewusstseins ("Historische Studien," vol. CCXCVIII; Berlin, 1936), pp. 74-87.

These German humanists and patriots also testified to the deep religious nature of the German people. Hutten, for example, wrote: "You could cite no people who hold more constantly to the faith and more firmly to the commands of Christ than our nation."[3] When they lived soberly, the Germans had no equal in the area of personal morality.[4] In one of his dialogues, Hutten reports that "nowhere does adultery occur more seldom, nowhere is marriage held stronger or firmer than here."[5] Cochläus demonstrated the religious nature of the German people by tracing the historical development of their character under the influence of the Christian faith.[6]

There was concern about the image of the German nation in the rest of Europe and about the Italian domination of

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[1] Johannes Cochläus, Brevis Germania Descriptio, edited by Rudolf Buchner ("Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte der Neuzeit," vol. I; Darmstadt, 1960), p. 62: "Inventa Germanorum. Credo equidem dei benignitate nunc Germanis longe maiorem quam antea ingenii vigorem acrimoniamque inesse. Quod ex mirabilibus sane eorum inventis licet coniectare."

[2] Knepper, Nationaler Gedanke, p. 111.

[3] Gesprächbuchlein, p. 83: "du kein Volk anführen, das sich beständiger an den Glauben und fester an die Gebote Christi hält als unsere Nation."

[4] Ibid., p. 222: "Wenn sie sie behalten und dabei nüchtern leben, so wüsst ich ihnen kein Volk gleich zu setzen."

[5] Ibid., p. 223: "Es fällt auch nirgends seltener Ehebruch vor, nirgends wird die Ehe strenger und fester gehalten denn hier."

[6] Brevis Germania Descriptio, p. 62.

Germany which gave rise to that image. The disrepute in which the Italians held the Germans embarrassed Hutten. He asked: "Is there a people treated more mockingly and more contemptibly by Rome than we Germans?"[1] The Romans evoked Hutten's hatred because they considered the Germans to be "dumb and brainless."[2] This national opposition between Germans and Italians was one of the chief themes of Hutten's writings.[3] He described the conflict as a struggle for German freedom which involved liberation from Rome as its religious manifestation.[4] This desire for liberation from Italian domination has been interpreted as a movement toward an independent, German national church.[5] Many of the grievances (Beschwerden, gravamina) of the German nation criticized the Italian or Roman domination of the German church.[6]

The records of the Reichstag available for our period reveal an interest in ecclesiastical affairs. The diets recognized the problems of the church and also pledged their opposition to schism. The meeting at Trier and Cologne in 1512 opposed any revolutionary movements by promising to protect the holy church and its possessions. Moralistic threats were issued against those whose drunkenness brought shame to Germany and against those who blasphemed God. The documents indicate the presence of a desire for harmony and order in the empire and the recognition of the need for God's help in properly ordering German affairs. Reform and order were thought to go hand in hand in both the church and the *Reich*.[1]

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[1] Hutten, Gesprächbuchlein, p. 81: "Ist irgend ein Volk, das spöttischer und verächtlicher von Rom behandelt wird als wir Deutschen?"

[2] Ibid., p. 116: "Vor allem machen sie sich verhasst bei uns Deutschens, die sie für gar so dumm und hirnlos halten, zu glauben, dass Geld für etwas geben nicht gekauft heisse."

[3] Ritter, Weltwirkung der Reformation, p. 107.

[4] Holborn, Hutten, p. 45.

[5] H. Cellarius, Die Reichsstadt Frankfurt und die Gravamina der Deutschen Nation ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," vol. CLXIII; Halle, 1938), p. 103. Albert Werminghoff, Nationalkirchliche Bestrebungen im deutschen Mittelalter (Stuttgart, 1910), pp. 127, 134.

[6] Deutsche Reichstagsakten, III, 645-688.

As a political institution the German nation had only a small role to play in the impulse for ecclesiastical reform. As a concept in the minds of many of the reformers, the German nation, and all that term symbolized, played a significant part in the Reformation in Germany.

C. Secular Issues and Church Reform

This summary of the kinds of reform interests in various secular aspects of German society concludes with some comment on the way Reformation scholarship has evaluated the relationship between secular issues and church reform. It is beyond doubt that the Reformation was a product of the totality of political, social, economic, and religious concerns of the time.[1]

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[1] *Aller dess Heiligen Römischen Reichs gehaltene Reichstage, abschiede und satzunge . . .*, edited by Nicolao Heyll (n.p., 1660), pp. 86, 89, 90, 94, 104.

1. Political. Some scholars have emphasized the domination of political factors in the Reformation. The knights, it is argued, illustrate Germans who joined the Reformation more for political than for theological or religious reasons. Concerning Hutten, Bax wrote:

> Hutten was never a theologian, and the Reformation seems to have attracted him mainly from its political side as implying the assertion of the dawning feeling of German nationality as against the hated enemies of freedom of thought and the new light, the clerical satellites of the Roman see.[2]

In a more recent book Swanson has asserted "a strong association at the Reformation and afterward between political and religious positions."[3] In an interesting but not satisfactorily documented hypothesis, Swanson argues that during the Reformation political changes preceded religious changes and that belief in spiritual powers and things of ultimate concern arise from a people's experience with "the constitutional arrangements, with the regimes, of societies and other groups."[4] Ranke's opinion about the predominance of political motivation is cautious and moderate. He believed, for example, that the conduct of Charles V in the affair of Luther was determined mainly, but not exclusively, by politics.[1]

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[1] Kaser, Politische und soziale Bewegungen, p. 17.

[2] Bax, Social Side of the Reformation, I, 187.

[3] Religion and Regime, p. 232.

[4] Ibid., pp. viii, 232.

2. Social. There is some scholarly opinion that the strongest impulse to the Reformation was given by the class struggle going on in Germany at that time. Hitchcock describes sixteenth century Germany as being "convulsed by a conflict among the various classes of society."[2] Moeller points to the social tension revealed in the reformatory preaching.[3] Kautsky, writing from a Marxist perspective, points to bitter class antagonism at the beginning of the Reformation and compares it to the situation existing a hundred years earlier in Bohemia.[4] Holborn expresses a more moderate opinion referring to "a particular constellation of social groups and social factors which was auspicious for the cause of reform."[5] Hitchcock suggests that, although social issues might not have

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[1] Ranke, History of the Reformation, pp. 243-244: "It cannot be affirmed that the conduct of Charles V in the affair of Luther was dictated exclusively by political motives; it is very probable that a denial of the infallibility of councils and an attack on the sacraments, was as offensive as it was unintelligible to him; but it is perfectly clear that he was mainly determined by politics."

[2] Knights' Revolt, p. vi.

[3] Reichstadt und Reformation, p. 20.

[4] Karl Kautsky, Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation, translated by J.L. and E.G. Mulliken (London, 1897), p. 99.

[5] Hajo Holborn, "The Social Basis of the German Reformation," Church History, V (1936), 330. He concludes the statement: "The most fortunate result was the fact that Protestantism as a religious idea was not from its inception bound up with a distinct class interest."

dominated, "clearly the power of the new religious doctrines was such that the social problem was seen through and in terms of it."[1] Harold Grimm relates the "universal dissatisfaction at the beginning of the sixteenth century, particularly in Germany," but believes it is misleading to refer to it as a class struggle.[2]

It is possible to see the German knights as an example of a declining social class which seized the new religious doctrines as a weapon to use in their fight against those who were costing them their social and political prestige.[3] In his description of Hutten's reform program, Holborn suggests that the class consciousness of the knight always permeated Hutten's thought.[4] Those who emphasize the importance of the social issues also describe Luther and Melanchthon as leaders of the middle-class moderate opposition.[5]

3. Economic. Some Reformation historians continue to emphasize the economic side of the movement. Decades ago, Bax stated the position in its most radical form: "The religious

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[1] Knights' Revolt, p. 28.

[2] "Social Forces in the German Reformation," p. 6. Cf. p. 12: "yet these cannot be described simply in terms of class conflict or dialectic materialism."

[3] Hitchcock, Knights' Revolt, pp. 2, 8.

[4] Holborn, Hutten, p. 155. Kamnitzer, Deutschen Bauernkrieges, pp. 113-119, describes "das Ende der Ritter."

[5] For example, Stern, Philipp Melanchthon, p. 60.

revolt was largely economical in its causes."[1] More recent historians have taken two major positions. Schapiro presents "some of the neglected economic aspects of the Lutheran Revolt," emphasizing not their dominance so much as their neglect by historians.[2] Kautsky takes the Marxist position arguing that the church was the representative of the propertied class; and, therefore, those who had the interest of the poor at heart were required to revolt.[3] Sixteenth century evidence for this interpretation comes from Aleander, the papal representative at the Diet of Worms, who suggested that since the knights were largely drawn to Luther for economic reasons the church should build up its own followers among the knights by offering similar hopes for financial reward.[4] The more moderate position has been to accept the place of economic factors in the Reformation but to deny that they were the only cause.[5]

It would be easy to discuss church reform in the sixteenth century by considering only the major humanists, Reformers, and theologians. However, to do so largely overlooks

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1. Social Side of the Reformation, I, 38.

2. Social Reform and the Reformation, p. 7.

3. Kautsky, Communism in Central Europe, p. 2.

4. Hitchcock, Knights' Revolt, p. 15.

5. For example, Grimm, "Social Forces in the German Reformation," p. 6: "There should be no doubt concerning the priority of theology in the minds of the reformers, for all attempts to attribute to them economic and other motives have failed. On the other hand, it is equally futile to attribute the spread of the Reformation solely to religious motives."

the large parts of the German people discussed in this chapter. Much more historical scholarship has been devoted to men like Erasmus, Luther, Geiler, and Cajetan than to these representatives of lay German society. It is time for Reformation historians to include in their investigations the religious and reformatory interests of the members of lay society, many of whom were of crucial significance in the course of the Reformation.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

One important aspect of ecclesiastical conditions on the eve of the Reformation is the conviction that the church needed to be reformed. In most cases, Protestant scholarship has typically observed a widespread desire for church reform in the early sixteenth century. Our purpose has been to collect the calls for reform from 1510 to 1520 in order to determine the alternatives to Luther's program.

A problem of semantics arises when the topic of church reform is considered. What, precisely, does one mean by church reform? A narrow definition of reform involves the submission of proposals which explicitly state the need for reform and offer specific programs to meet that need. Under such a definition of reform some of this study would have to be excluded. For example, the chapter on Christian renewal does not deal with church reform in the strictest sense of the term. In fact, there were few instances of this kind of church reform in our period. One of the most striking things about the literature published in Germany from 1510 to 1520 is the paucity of reform programs which went under that name. There were practically no books which purported to be reform programs.

A broad definition of reformation includes all efforts to amend or improve ecclesiastical conditions, even if those efforts were not referred to as church reform programs. We have operated under this definition of reform and, where necessary, have implicitly drawn an individual's concept of church reform from works which were not specifically reform programs.

The more important question is: What, if anything, was unique about the concept of church reform from 1510 to 1520? Why has the period beginning in 1517 been called the "Reformation," implying that it was distinctively characterized by church reform? Three possibilities might constitute the uniqueness of church reform from 1510 to 1520. Church reform might have been more extensive in that period; it might have been more complete, thorough, or radical; or it might have involved new methods. As we proceed, we can comment on the actual presence of these three possibilities. If they were not present, then the "Reformation era" might be a misnomer. Is it correct to characterize the essential thrust of the period as church reform? Our survey of the published literature of the time is the most concrete evidence which questions that characterization.

With these introductory matters in mind, we can respond to the three questions which were posed in the preface.

The first question is: How significant was the cry for reform in quantitative terms? Our most tangible evidence comes from the nature of the books published during the period. First of all, the tabulation reveals considerable reader-interest in non-religious topics. If the period beginning in 1517 is distinctively one of reform, there should be substantial numbers of books dealing with this topic of supposed dominant concern. But that is clearly not the case. The absence of such works has already been noted. The tabulation reveals few documents on church reform but does reveal a strong interest in religion in German society. However, the overwhelming portion of these books relates to the practice of medieval and Catholic piety, not to the issue of church reform.

Our survey of selected representative figures reveals few people who were driven by a compelling desire for reform. Most of the groups and individuals we have discussed were interested in other matters and were not singularly concerned with church reform. For example, many of the humanists had some interest in the improvement of the church, but they were more interested in education, scholarship, morality, and the sources of antiquity. The representatives of secular society tended to be far more concerned for their own self-interest than for the welfare of the church. They were interested in ecclesiastical improvements, but such improvements would usually aid them politically, socially, or economically. It is questionable whether they would have expressed interest in church reform if it had not involved these other benefits.

The response of the church to Luther indicates that it did not recognize the presence of extensive desire for reform. The church did not appear to take Luther seriously and was, no doubt, shocked by the widespread response he evoked. It is unlikely that the church would have treated Luther so cavalierly if it had perceived an extensive desire for church reform in Germany. Perhaps the church was simply blind to what was going on. However, the possibility exists that there was nothing to indicate to the ecclesiastical leadership that the period in which they lived was to be uniquely characterized "the Reformation."

Neither did the political leaders of the time recognize the existence of widespread reform concern. The reticence on the part of responsible leaders to commit themselves to reform indicates either their lack of conviction or their failure to perceive that many people wanted church reform. It is difficult to imagine the political leaders we have discussed not taking a more active role in so "noble" a project as church reform if they had thought that all of Germany was crying for reform.

At the same time, it must be admitted that to imply that the calls for reform were not as extensive as had usually been supposed requires some explanation of the rapid and broad response to Martin Luther. Something must have caused so many to follow him so readily, and perhaps that something was the feeling that he might be an effective agent to bring about their reform desires. However, once more one is suspicious that many followed out of self-interest as much as out of interest in church reform.

Both the extensiveness and the depth of dissatisfaction with the church can be questioned. How serious did those who criticized ecclesiastical conditions consider the situation to be? The ecclesiastical criticism as we summarized it took a relatively modest form. There were few really radical denials of the value and goodness of the church. In most cases the critics were careful to point out that they were not denying the worth of the church but only seeking to improve it in practice. The numerous books on piety and the practice of the Christian life rarely suggested anything new in the life of the church. They emphasized what were basically medieval practices and urged their readers to live by the religion they already knew.

A popular answer to our first question is that the desire for reform of the terrible conditions within the church was so extensive that it was a major cause of the Reformation. That answer may be challenged at two points. We have already referred to the scholarship that describes the period under consideration as one of religious vitality, not religious decline. Now we question the existence of widespread desire for reform and whether or not it was a "cause" of the Reformation.

Was the cause of the Reformation the serious situation which everyone wanted corrected? Probably not. Such a simplistic explanation overlooks the political, social, and economic factors without which the Reformation would probably never have occurred. The importance of these factors limits the significance of the desire for reform as a cause of the Reformation.

Finally, some notes of optimism dispute the seriousness of the situation. We have summarized the optimistic views of Erasmus and noted the pride in German morality and piety expressed by men like Hutten and Cochläus. This optimism and pride belies the usual interpretation that everyone desired the reform of dreadful conditions within the church.

Our second question can be dealt with more briefly: What were the objectives of the reform proposals? The two most widely held objectives of reform were the reform of morals and the end of the financial exploitation and political domination of the Germans by the Roman church. Neither of these was particularly unique nor incisive. The criticisms of immorality were relatively widespread but represented no distinctive approach to church reform. They provide little reason to call the period the Reformation era. The call for the end of the financial exploitation and political domination of the Germans by the Roman church involved no fundamental concern over the need for reform. The secular elements who emphasized these complaints were concerned more with the economic and political questions. They were not primarily interested in an essential reform of the church but in an improvement of their economic and political status. Both of these objectives are valid concerns for church reform and should not be belittled. However, they do not indicate that there was enough interest in church reform per se to call the era the "Reformation."

To these objectives the humanists added the need for reform of education and learning. With the exception of some of the younger humanists who actively joined the Reformation, the humanists tended to be more interested in education and learning than in church reform. They considered the improvement of education and scholarship to be an important goal which might also lead to the reform of the church. However, their conviction that church reform would follow the improvement of education and the return to the sources might have been more valid if they had found a way to communicate their proposals to the people and implement them effectively.

Two additional objectives are more significant. There was considerable interest in Christian renewal. Here, the object of reform was the practice of the Christian religion which was the simple exercise of morality and piety. Geiler is the best example of this approach to church reform. It is reform on an individual, and not on an institutional, basis. The reform of individuals could best effect the reform of the church. This is perhaps the only kind of reform program which was extensively proposed in our period. However, it, too, involved little that was new or original.

The second of these more significant objectives of church reform was the reform of theology. This was expressed particularly by those who were to become "Protestants" and is perhaps the single new and different concept of church reform that came out of the period. Those who proposed a theological reform suggested that some theological convictions of the time needed to be replaced by more authentic Christian teaching. As we noted in chapter five, they had in mind a different concept of the nature of the church which in turn influenced their understanding of the priesthood and the sacramental system. They related their theological concerns to the religious needs of the people, and this perhaps accounts for the impressive response to the Reformation movement. They translated their theological contributions into forms that were meaningful for the practice of the Christian religion. Thus, unlike the humanists, their approach to church reform affected more people.

Our third question is: How were these objectives of reform to be realized? In other words, what were the strategies or methods by which it was proposed that these desires for reform might be implemented? The first such strategy was "ecclesiastical criticism as church reform." As has been noted, this involved no radical restructuring of the church. There was nothing wrong with the church that could not be corrected by returning to the practice of Christian ideals. The second strategy for reform was the search for authority upon which to base the improvement of the church. Because of the fear of radical change, there existed the need to find support for ideas in the past. The success of this method of reform was limited by problems arising over how authorities were to be interpreted. For example, nearly everyone wanted to base his approach to reform on the Bible; the problems arose when the Bible was used by those on opposite sides of each issue. Theoretically, the search for authority to determine reform goals is reasonable. However, in practice, we have seen how the use of authorities did not solve the differences of opinion within the church.

The third strategy emphasized individual over institutional reform. There was a striking absence of interest in institutional reform of the church in our period. We have conjectured that this was due in part to an awareness that it had failed in the past. It is as if the people remembered the failures of the great attempts at conciliar reform in the fifteenth century and considered such efforts to be futile. Therefore, institutional reform, for whatever reason, was de-emphasized; and full expression was given to individual reform in the sense of Christian renewal.

In conclusion, the intriguing question remains: why did the Reformation happen? We have found no satisfying explanation in collecting and investigating the calls for reform. With only the alternative proposals we have surveyed, would there have been a Reformation? Were there proposals extensive and unique enough to have caused the period to be known as the "Reformation"? The answer seems to be "no." Our study leaves unanswered the question of why the period is known as the Reformation. We have not found sufficiently extensive and incisive reform proposals to explain the Reformation. Thus the stage is left open for the one important figure not included in this study, Martin Luther. Perhaps it is his personal contribution that has led the period to be called the Reformation.

It would be folly to suggest that there was no significant desire for reform during our period. At the same time, there is insufficient evidence to support the popular generalization that everyone desired reform or that all Germany was crying for reform. This generalization has been questioned in two ways. First, the absence of specific reform proposals or programs in the publications of our period challenges this assumption. Secondly, church reform was the driving force in the lives of very few people. We have found by implication considerable discussion of reform or improvement of the church; we have found practically no individuals or groups whose conviction of the serious need for reform compelled them to find their identity as reformers *per se*.

Many Germans had some interest in reform or improvement of the church, but few were inflamed with the desire for reformation. German society has been characterized as highly combustible material waiting for the "match" of reformation to be struck by Luther. However, there is little evidence that Germany was a tinderbox which would respond to Luther with a conflagration.

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